

Bare Facts

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38° 58' 7" North; 95° 47' 56" West

The Body Project

Bradley University has a web site that caught my attention. It's amazing how the theme of body acceptance keeps being rediscovered in non naturist settings. Regardless, naturists applaud anyone that takes up our banner – even if they are unaware of it. Unfortunately, they don't include naturism as an option. Go figure.

However the web site does say they are seeking to locate books, facilities and programs to help readers on their way to body acceptance. This looks like an opportunity for the Naturist Society to jump on board.

You can go to: <http://thebodyproject.bradley.edu/> to look it over. There are a number of good topics covered along with an extensive list of written resources if you want to study this timely issue in depth. [Ed.]

"The obsession with thinness is most deeply about cutting girls and women down to size." Jean Kilbourne (1993:137).

As children we are encouraged to idealize Barbie dolls and G.I. Joes, figures with body proportions that are virtually impossible to attain. As adults, women are taught to aspire to the physiques of super-models, and men to the sculpted bodies of professional athletes, again ideals that few of us could ever achieve. Trying to live up to these unrealistic body ideals can take a significant toll on us, taxing our self-esteem, our time and energy, and our wallets in pursuit of bodily perfection.

The Body Project was developed by the Women's Studies Program of Bradley University in cooperation with the University's Center for Wellness and Department of Sociology. We invite you to use there site.

1. To challenge the way you think about current standards of beauty and fitness.
2. To locate books and videos, facilities and programs and courses to help you on your way to body acceptance.
3. To expand your understanding of the links between current body ideals and the political, economic and cultural force that shape them.
4. To get information and assistance with balanced nutrition and eating disorders.
5. To have your say on issues of body image and standards of beauty and fitness; And to start down the path to a positive body image.

"A cultural fixation on female thinness is not an obsession about female beauty but an obsession about female obedience." Naomi Wolf (1990: 187)

The Body Project is for women and men of all ages, in the Bradley community and beyond. Join us in increasing awareness and acceptance of the human body in all its shapes and sizes.

Annual Meeting Report

As required by our by-laws, we held our annual meeting the evening of October 29 at Dave's wonderful home. We started with a presentation of our financial condition. Upon approval, members present in person and by proxy choose Carl, Chance, John S., Michael, Tom, and Webb to serve on the board for the next year. We thank them for volunteering their time and effort. If you have comments for the board, please contact any of them.

Next commenced a lively discussion of accomplishments for the past year. Through the tireless efforts of our caretaker, Vlad, we continued to improve our facility. Nearly all the lounge chairs have been restored. Fresh sand now covers South Beach. And a number of other improvements most visitors are not aware of but contribute toward the positive experience our supporters have come to expect.

At our last Annual Meeting, we decided to implement a student membership. Later, this morphed into our NUTs (Naturists Under Thirty) membership. Combined, they have been very successful. As a result of NUTs and other initiatives, our membership since last year has grown by over 60%. Although most of us are one year older, the average age of our members had declined substantially.

We also discussed some of the social and educational events we held this season. Some were highly successful; some not quite so. We will repeat many of them and schedule others next year depending on the input we receive from members and supporters.

Last year, many of our members and supporters completed a survey the results of which served as our guide for improvements this year past. We discussed another survey and some of the information we hope to gain from it. With good fortune, our new survey will be completed in the next few weeks. Watch your inbox. When you receive it, please take time to provide your feedback. It is extremely useful.

Some suggested we schedule saunas on nights other than Saturday which we will do. Watch the schedule. If there is a particular time best for you, please contact us.

Anyone wishing to provide additional input for consideration or help implement our program should contact us.

DON'T FORGET

Activities designated HN are sponsored by Heartland Naturists

Nov 5; Sat; 8-10; Sauna
Nov 6; Sun; 4-6; Board of Directors
Nov 18; Fri; 8:30-10:30; HN Swim
Nov 20; Sun; 8-10; Sauna
Nov 23; Wed; 8-10; Sauna
Dec 4; Sun; 4-6; Board of Directors
Dec 4; Sun; 8-10; Sauna
Dec 10; Sat; 8-10; Sauna
Dec 28; Wed; 8-10; Sauna

Exploring Attitudes toward Nudity

A San Francisco reporter has attempted to shed some light on the problem of the extreme reactions to nudity and uncover our differing philosophies about it. This is in connection with the recent controversial actions of a number of men who are demanding the right to not only appear nude on the streets of the Castro District, but also to enter restaurants unclothed and without placing a towel under them when seated.

The reporter chose to visit a life drawing art class in order to gain some insight into the question of why people react as they do to nudity. He then explained that he chose this example of nudity because, "I thought that people who spend several hours a week studying naked bodies might have a distinct perspective on the nudity question."

The reporter notes that for many people, nudity brings up strong feelings. These can range from making some uncomfortable, to freaking out others. Whether these reactions to nudity are about sexuality or simply decency is debatable. Politicians take a variety of positions from participating in sexting, as has been in the news recently, to opposing nudity. What is going on?

From the get go, it is puzzling that such a well established and relatively non controversial example of nudity would be the preferred choice for discovering why Americans hold such ambivalent views about nakedness. But, who are we to question the wisdom of the press? Go to: http://kalwnews.org/audio/2011/10/04/our-feelings-nudity-laid-bare_1291395.html

The reporter says he didn't think he was a prude, but when the nude model disrobed and struck a yoga-like pose, he had to admit, he felt a bit odd. This simply illustrates the depth of the body taboo we carry without even being aware of it.

At the weekly figure drawing session he visited the median age was something like 70. The model looked like she was in her 30s. The model began by moving into some rapid-fire poses, but after a while, she began to hold each pose for longer intervals.

During a break in the lesson, several of the artists were questioned. One of the artists held the opinion that even though she's been figure drawing for around 60 years, she doesn't have much tolerance for the type of nudity you see in the Castro. Her reason? "I don't find that particularly attractive." *Huh? What's attractiveness have to do with anything?*

However, many of the artists indicated that they welcome the chance to observe nakedness. And it has nothing to do with whether or not the person is attractive.

Another artist stated, "I think it is because it's a beautiful form, but ... I'm interested in people.

For these artists, figure drawing gives them the chance to learn more about themselves and others – and so, it makes sense that they'd find prudishness a little puzzling.

Finally, the author summarizes his observations by saying, "The way the people at the... Arts Center see nudity couldn't be further removed from the way it's being discussed in the

media and politics. And it raises some questions for me: Why should our bodies strike us as inherently unsightly? And what does that say more generally, about our attitudes toward each other, and ourselves? I don't know if this means that I'm becoming a nudist, but I will think about enrolling in a drawing class."

The author asked some good questions, but his interview with the artists didn't seem directed to answering them. It's a pity. Some of them might have had some insights that would have been worth hearing instead of the superficial comments reported. Perhaps we should ask these questions in a survey of the public? [Ed.]

Bigotry Toward Naturist Seeking Office

Finally, an elections-related issue in the City of Stuart, Florida guaranteed to get people talking. This year promises to generate public comment – and engage voters – like no election in recent memory.

The outcome of this race likely will turn on a single question: Is Stuart ready to elect a nudist to the city commission? Specifically, can Mezzapelle convince a majority of voters his occasional participation in sanctioned nudist 5k races "isn't relevant to the city of Stuart" and "doesn't negatively impact my ability to serve as city commissioner?"

Mezzapelle is hesitant to discuss his nude racing, which he says is "perfectly legal" and "not an appropriate part of the conversation for what I'm trying to accomplish."

The outgoing commissioner hasn't endorsed anyone for the office, but says he is skeptical that voters will be willing to elect someone who participates in nude 5k races to the commission.

"No doubt about it – nude running (in sanctioned races) is legal behavior." "But so is Rachel's Strip Club (in West Palm Beach). The defense, 'it's legal,' is not an absolute defense in this community, which has repeatedly expressed its desire to regulate this type of business."

If elected, Mezzapelle says he "probably won't continue running in nudist races. I don't want there to be any suggestion of impropriety."

The authors says, "I happen to think Mezzapelle would be an excellent city commissioner and prefer him, as a candidate, over his opponent. But I also agree with the outgoing commissioner who offered the following prediction in the Group 4 race: The question is, does the city want a commissioner coming from a 'nudist' perspective? I would say 'no'."

We'll learn the naked truth on Election Day.

More power to Mr. Mezzapelle. Naturists and nudists contribute millions to the Florida economy. You might think this would grant them some respect. Not a chance! Furthermore, Mr. Mezzapelle has a long history of public service in the community. Apparently that's a big, "So what!" when it comes to qualifications for office. Shame on the bigots if this is the issue on which the election turns. [Ed.]

Go to: <http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2011/oct/23/rich-campbell-the-naked-truth-nudity-issue-may/?print=1>

Nudism Embraced By Younger Generation

By Courtney Polivka

Every now and then someone writes an honest story about naturism. No shopworn jokes, no laughing up their sleeve at the nudies, just a well written account of naturism as experienced and told by the participants. You, the reader get to decide what you make of it. Well done, Courtney!

I've exchanged a few e-mails with Courtney and received her permission to reprint her story. In my first message I ended by suggesting she should try it herself. I've made that suggestion to other writers, but Courtney surprised me. She already had and is now an enthusiastic promoter of naturism to those she knows, some of whom have joined her. That deserves a major, "Attagirl!" [Ed.]

For the original article go to: <http://www.mtsusidelines.com/nudism-embraced-by-younger-generation-1.2644538>

Knock, knock.

Chris, 26, peeks his curly blond head around the door. He is naked except for his glasses and wedding ring. "C'mon in, you guys," he beckons to the couple, Phillip, 26, and Cora, 22, standing on the doorstep. A sweet and tangy aroma meets their nostrils as they step into the foyer and quickly undress by the door. Foster the People plays through the living room speakers, while two cats lounge on the couch.

There are laughter and hugs as the couple steps into the tiny, crowded kitchen at the back of the house. Other friends have already made themselves at home.

Caz, 20, stands off to the side, as Chris moves to the sink to cut tomatoes. She wears only jewelry—a jade stone hung from a string about her neck, two snakebite lip rings and a bracelet made from small wooden beads. Her long, honey-brown hair falls gently on her shoulders. Maddie, 19, and Felicia, 19, sit at the small kitchen table, looking, for all the world, like they were at a normal dinner party.

Carol, 30, Chris's wife, laughs as she stirs a brimming pot of apple chicken chili, wearing nothing but an apron and her wedding ring. Her dark brown hair frames her face. Cora sits down at the table, with Phillip behind her.

The kitchen is warm, almost too warm, but a delicious breeze sneaks in from a cracked window, bringing with it the crisp, evening air, cooled by the onset of autumn.

This is naked dinner.

First times

The abrupt turn to cooler weather means that summer nudist activities like skinny-dipping and naked volleyball are drawing to a close. But naked dinners, naked movie night and hot tubbing are all on the agenda for the coming winter months.

After a hearty dinner of chili and cornbread, everyone settles into the soft, oversized living room furniture. Their laughter is loud enough to be heard outside, as they watch YouTube video from a laptop hooked up to a TV.

Analise, 22, arrives late to join the party, wearing only a sarong around her hips and a zip-off jacket, which are quickly shed. Everyone is comfortable and relaxed. But it wasn't always that way, at least for Carol.

"Both Chris and I had grown up very body-conscious and very religious," she says. "But when Chris went out to school in California, he was around a lot more body-free people, and that intrigued him."

As a young married couple, Chris and Carol explored the idea of social nudism together, but it took them two years to get up the courage to try it.

"We had been naked at home and outside," says Chris. "But taking that extra step to actually going someplace where being naked is the thing that you do – with other people – is always slightly mind-boggling."

"The first time was fun," Carol continues, "But the second time we visited a resort out in California for our third anniversary, and we got to be naked for five days straight, and that was *it*. We were *in*. Now, we've been doing it ever since and getting everyone we know to try it." It's been three years since that first time.

Caz's first brush with nudity came right after high school.

"Two years ago," says Caz, "[Name omitted] would leave for weekends, and he would always say that he was playing volleyball by a lake."

But Caz says she knew he was lying because there are no volleyball courts by any of the nearby lakes. Eventually, he told her that he was going to Rock Haven Lodge Family Nudist Park in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Caz, who played volleyball in high school, says that, "As soon as he told me that he had been playing naked volleyball, I was like 'Let's go!'"

It was there that Caz met Chris and Carol for the first time in 2009. Rock Haven is also where Phillip and Cora met the three of them this past summer.

Phillip and Cora have been participating in social nudism for only a few months, although Cora says she started exploring nudism as a teenager at home and she and Phillip have been "closet nudists" together since they got married over a year ago.

"I still feel rather limited in my nudism experience," says Phillip. "Cora has done this much more than me."

However, making the jump from the "textile world" to the world of nudism wasn't that hard of a leap for Phillip.

"He's very accepting of everyone. Period," says Cora. "He's never been one to judge based on appearance or beliefs." "Cora, on the other hand," says Phillip, "has always enjoyed being naked, and social nudism has given her a way to meet like-minded people."

Cora says that for her, nudism is an escape from the stress of

day-to-day life. “There is nothing more freeing, more relaxing, than being naked, especially being naked outside. When I take those clothes off, my stress goes with them and I feel like I can breathe again, even if only for an afternoon. It’s therapeutic.”

Life lessons

In addition to being therapeutic, everyone in the group agrees that nudism has given them a healthier perception of the human body and human sexuality, as well as confidence and a great way to relax and meet new people.

“Whenever you meet people naked, it’s so straight-forward,” says Caz. “There’s no odd dance, trying to figure each other out. You start from zero.”

Chris agrees. “It’s an automatic common factor. When you meet someone naked, you automatically have a kinship with them because, well, you’re both kind of crazy, walking around naked,” he laughs.

For Carol, nudism has played a large role in her personal body-acceptance. “Advertisements tell us that you are only beautiful if you fit very specific criteria,” says Carol. “When you go to a nudist place, you see literally every shape and size.”

Growing up in a very religious house-hold, Carol says that nudism has helped her realize that her body isn’t inherently dangerous. “I was told growing up that your body is sexual, which led me to a lot of shame,” she says. “But what I’ve learned just being naked is not provocative.”

“Nudism has changed my perspective to see people as beautiful, no matter what. Being able to see that for other people has allowed me to see that in myself. I am beautiful just the way I am,” she says confidently.

Carol knows that many people, especially women, may be worried about receiving unwelcome attention. But she argues that a bikini draws a different kind of attention than that of simply being naked. “If you’re specifically putting a triangle of fabric on each place that you don’t want someone to look, it’s saying ‘Look here.’ But if you just leave it all out in the open, then people see what it is, and move on.”

She continues. “Growing up really religious, so much of the body-shame is that if you have female curves, then you’re going to make men do X, Y and Z. Like, they can’t control themselves, so you need to not have curves. What I’ve realized is that what I was told growing up – and advertising does this day-in and day-out – is your body is sexual, which led me to a lot of shame. And I covered up completely.”

Chris interjects, “– And when she says completely, she means cover up in a way that makes her look the least feminine and least attractive possible.”

“But what I’ve learned,” says Carol, “is that the human body is not *only* sexual. But we hear this message that the human body is *so* dangerous that if anybody sees it, all these bad things are going to happen. And that’s just not true.

“When you find out that you can be naked and nobody’s going to lust after you, freak out or attack you – they’re just going to talk to you like a human being, look you in the eye and have a heart-to-heart conversation with you – that’s

really freeing.”

“It’s not that nobody looks or nobody notices,” says Chris. “When you meet somebody new, you have that moment, and then it’s like, ‘Okay, done.’ Conversation anyone?”

Chris firmly believes that the life-long benefits of nudism greatly outweigh the momentary uncomfortableness of being naked socially for the first time. “It really comes down to are you willing to trade 30 seconds of ‘I can’t believe I’m doing this,’ for the rest of the time being like, ‘This is awesome,’” he says with a smile.

“I think if you’re curious, it’s just a matter of getting over the nervousness. Because you can’t say that you’re not going to be nervous. You are. But it goes away quickly.”

Young nudism

Naked dinners are just one of the many activities young nudists do to socialize, but there are much larger events, specifically for young people, that take place during the year.

“The resorts are great to go to in the summer,” says Cora, “But the age group is definitely older, so it’s nice to go with friends your age.”

Chris agrees. “If you want something that’s easy to access, then try the AANR clubs (American Association for Nude Recreation) like Rock Haven or TNS (The Nudist Society). But in my opinion, for young people it’s not really the best option.”

Chris believes that young people interested in nudism should find an event that lasts an entire weekend, such as the events hosted by Florida Young Naturists, based out of West Palm Beach, Fla., which hosts three naked bashes a year for people between the ages of 18 and 30. “There are usually about 150-200 young people who come on those weekends,” says Chris.

“Plus,” he continues, “because Rock Haven is only a 10 minute drive from your dorm, you can always chicken out halfway there and just go home. With an event, you’ve invested the time to drive there, which I think helps with the nervousness.”

Such events feature bands, volleyball tournaments, a pool, sauna and hot tub, yoga classes, hikes, hula hooping, a drum circle, bonfires, body painting and more. “We’ve had a giant blow-up water slide at the last two events,” says Caz.

An obstacle with these events is that they’re not here in Tennessee. You have to go out of state and somewhat plan ahead. “But camping is free,” says Cora. “All you have to pay for is gas and food.”

“And we have best friends across the country now, since we spent three days with them naked at bonfires,” says Chris.

A modern face

Many people from the “textile world” think that nudism is just an old hippie thing. “And it is,” says Carol, “but it’s coming up. A younger generation is embracing it now.”

And with the embrace of a younger generation, nudism is taking on a more modern face. It’s about equality and acceptance and unplugging from technology and getting back with people. Nudism provides a way to socialize outside of the Internet, and it’s about finding common ground with people from all over the world.

Nude Baptism In The Early Church

Professor Everett Ferguson has written a monumental study cataloguing everything concerning baptism in the centuries after Christ. He notes the practice of nude baptism.

Just prior to entering the water the candidates removed their clothes, for the baptism was received nude. This surprises moderns, for we wonder about modesty. This may be a consideration in the instructions of the *Apostolic Tradition* (21.4-5) to baptize the small children first, the grown men next, and finally the women.

In order to observe decency women deacons assisted at the baptism of women according to the third-century *Didascalia* (16), repeated in the 4th century *Apostolic Constitutions* (3.15-16). In the baptism of a woman, the male presbyter anointed the forehead, pronounced the formula, and dipped the head, but the female deacon anointed the body and received the woman as she came out of the water.

Some baptisteries may have had curtains. Another factor is that the ancient world seems to have had a more relaxed attitude toward nudity. The nudity expressed the idea of new birth- hence in art the baptizand is shown not only nude but smaller than the baptizer.

This manner of representation is not an indication of infant or child baptism but follows artistic convention. The newly baptized person put on a white garment, symbolizing purity.

Go to: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:0Fzdj0zNM9wJ:www.adventist.kz/download/education/patr/everett+ferguson+-baptism+in+the+patristic+period+-article.rar%3DFHPSESSID%3Dfcc49a71e9980194f6aac3e3bfbdb1836+everett+ferguson,+baptism+in+the+patristic+period&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

<http://www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus.html>

The *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome was composed in approximately 215 in Rome. It apparently preserved older second century practices which were in danger of falling to disuse or innovation.

Hippolytus writes, "At the hour in which the cock crows, they shall first pray over the water. When they come to the water, the water shall be pure and flowing, that is, the water of a spring or a flowing body of water. Then they shall take off all their clothes. The children shall be baptized first. All children who can answer for themselves, let them answer. If there are any children who cannot answer for themselves, let their parents answer for them, or someone else from their family. After this, the men will be baptized. Finally, the women, after they have unbound their hair, and removed their jewelry. No one shall take any foreign object with themselves down into the water... Then, after these things, the bishop passes each of them on nude to the elder who stands at the water. They shall stand in the water naked. A deacon, likewise, will go down with them into the water."

However, it needs to be pointed out that Christians didn't invent nude baptism. It already was a Jewish practice. <http://www.haydid.org/ronimmer.htm>

Jewish baptism has never been taken lightly, but in ancient times immersion was to be performed in the presence of witnesses (Yebam. 47b). The person being baptized made special preparations by cutting his nails, undressed completely and made a fresh profession of his faith before the designated "fathers of the baptism" (Kethub. 11a; Erub 15a).

The immersion candidate was not touched by the baptizer in Jesus' day. Because Leviticus 15:16 says "He shall wash all his flesh in the water," Judaism stresses that the entire body must come in contact with the water of the mikveh. To insure the immersion was valid, no clothing or individuals could touch the candidate. Any such intervention that prevented the water from reaching a part of the body was known as *Chatzitzah* and rendered the immersion invalid. Although the mikveh was more spiritual than physical, often the bath had two sets of steps, one entering and another leaving so as not to defile what had been purified.

These are the facts, but what is the significance of having someone be nude while baptized? Margaret Miles in her book, *Carnal Knowing* offers a number of insights that are critical in understanding the Christian practice of nude baptism, but also parallel the understanding that naturists have for social nudity.

She first observes that Christian literature... "reveals that most historical people thought it obvious that changed ideas follow, rather than precede, changed behavior. **The aim of religious practices was thus not to "act out" previously held ideas or beliefs, but to realize – to make real – in a person's body the strong experience that, together with the religious community's interpretation of that experience, produced a countercultural religious self.**" (p. 24)

Second, "The practices that prepared for and accompanied baptism developed a **context for nakedness** that removed the naked body from social meanings and identified it as the site and symbol of religious subjectivity; in Christian baptism, **the naked body was no longer object, but subject.**" (p. 25)

Third, the "...theological meanings of **nakedness in Christian baptism, the symbolism of death to former commitments and socialization and birth to a new existence predominate.** The stripping of clothing followed by nakedness and, after baptism, the donning of a white linen garment was paradigm of the deconstruction of secular socialization; it was a symbolic regression to an infantile state, a conscious choice of allegiance to the Trinity, and a reinvestment of loyalty in the Christian community witnessing the baptism – **a new "public" in which the body of the initiate had been incorporated into the Body of Christ and the naked body, along with the soul, redeemed from secular meaning and assimilated to religious meaning.**" (p. 36)

The highlighted portions of Miles analysis are instructive. The success of the early Christian in taking people out of their previous culture and incorporating them into a new, and I might add, highly controversial religion was remarkable. At times you could lose your life for taking this step.

Yet, 400 years later this religion dominated the Empire.

This was culture change of unimagined magnitude at the beginning. Of course, promoting social nudity wasn't the purpose for the Christian church or for nude baptism. That's not the point. The point is that these people were able to successfully instill new meanings for the body through a modality (nakedness) that symbolically moved people permanently out of their old lives into a new life. Sadly, this practice would cause horror today.

This is our loss and a regression in the understanding of the dignity of the body that is actually non-Christian. Naturists are also using nudity to counter a culture whose values have degraded the dignity of the body. We refuse to participate in the objectification of the body including our own, and unashamedly proclaim our bodies/ourselves as subject.

Naturism deliberately initiates a new socialization for adherents to a new existence where nudity and sex are not identical. Men and women see one another in their personhood without exploiting each other. Naturism seeks to redeem the naked body from the socialization of the corrupt larger society by incorporating as many as possible in this new paradigm so they may assimilate naturist values. [Ed.]

From The Mail Bag

Dear Lake Edun,

I have been out there in last couple weeks, nice on weekdays even with few or no one there! Very relaxing! Might make the sauna this sat. I would like to make the party on the 29th. Have not gone to it before. It's not at Edun so can we wear our birthday suits in the jacuzzi? Thinking about the board meeting and going for 1 of the spots. See ya soon at Edun!

- John

Dear Lake Edun,

My significant other and I visited Lake Edun during one of your open houses this summer. We really enjoyed our visit this summer and would like to experience it during the fall. I will be visiting with him in Kansas the weekend of the 21st, and we were wondering about coming out to camp Friday night. We were thinking about coming out Friday afternoon and staying through Saturday afternoon. What are the possibilities of this? Neither of us are members of Lake Edun, as I live in Texas, and he lives in Kansas. Thanks so much for your assistance.

- Sharon

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(785) 478-BARN

Membership Application Change of Address Form *Please Print*

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