

Bare Facts

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38° 58' 7" North; 95° 47' 56" West

Naked Plays First Of May

After a couple of prior false starts, this year's production of the Naked Plays is fully cast and in rehearsals. Be sure to mark your calendar and don't miss what we are calling, "An Evening of Naked Surprises. Performances are scheduled for Friday and Saturday, May 1 & 2, and again May 8 & 9 at 7:30pm at the Topeka Performing Arts Center.

The evening consists of three original one-act plays submitted by playwrights from across the country. Each play addresses issues of body acceptance from a different perspective. These three were selected by a panel of judges as semi-finalists from about a dozen manuscripts submitted to our play-writing competition.

As was the case with our last production of original one-act plays, the audience will vote on the winner and follow-ups of the competition.

In *Alarmed* by Andrew Moore from Los Angeles, Sarah is forced to flee her apartment building because of a fire alarm when she is in the middle of a shower. She then discovers most of her neighbors, and even one of the firemen, belong to a local Nudist facility. In *Alarmed*, we see how Sarah deals with this realization and grows in the process.

Naked Came A Sheep Dog by Lawrence DuKore from New York City, introduces us to Gerard, a sheep dog who is smarter than his intolerant owner. As the play unfolds, the wisdom displayed by Gerard makes him more human while the intolerance of his master causes him to become more animal until they actually change rolls.

Under New Management by Terry Davis of Albuquerque, New Mexico, follows the development of Bailey who inherits a classy resort from her favorite uncle, Bill. Although she had never visited the resort when Bill was alive, he had always talked very enthusiastically about it. Baily is excited about the opportunities and responsibilities as the new owner. She is upset when she discovers Bill's favorite resort is a Nudist facility.

Three very different, and very original plots will make for a wonderful evening of entertainment. We hope all Eduners and friends of Edun will plan to join us for this evening of good, original entertainment. Our playwright competition and subsequent production of the plays is an important part of our on-going educational mission. Take advantage of this opportunity to invite your friends so they may gain a better understanding of the lifestyle we take for granted.

Tickets are limited and are available for \$15. For seniors, children under 18 and anyone currently without a job, tickets are \$10. Order your tickets by mail or online. Indicate the number of tickets you need and the night desired.

The last performance of the Naked Plays was a sell-out. We don't want any of our supporters to be disappointed so, please, order early.

Work Days Are Important

Every Spring and Fall, we schedule a few days where Eduners can get together and do some of the many tasks required to keep our special place truly special. So far, weather has not cooperated this year.

We have a work day scheduled for Saturday, April 11 at our special place and another at the Topeka Performing Arts Center to build the stage and sets for the plays on April 25.

These are an enjoyable way to get to know other Eduners better and make a meaningful contribution to the success we all appreciate. If you are able, plan to join us and pitch in.

About a month ago, someone dumped a refrigerator in our parking lot. If you have a way to transport it to a dump, please contact us.

Random Thoughts And Reflections

Daylight Savings Time has started, Spring is here, and the days are getting warmer. Already some Eduners are enjoying the warm weather at our special place. We all look forward to getting out of our houses and meeting again in the sunshine. Our first open house is scheduled for May 16. Begin talking to your friends about visiting. It is always a treat to introduce others to the joys we take for granted.

Time has come to once again change the lock on our gate. Members will find the combination to the new lock enclosed. If you are the last person to leave, insure the chain is locked by passing the hasp of the lock through the top eye bolt, then through the chain, and the bottom eye bold.

DON'T FORGET

Activities designated HN are sponsored by Heartland Naturists

Apr 11; Sat; 12-4; Work Day

Apr 11; Sat; 5-7; Board of Directors

Apr 11; Sat; 8-10; Sauna

Apr 12; Sun; 12-4; Work Day

Apr 17; Fri; 8-10; HN Swim

Apr 25; Sat; 12-4; Work Day-Naked Plays

Apr 25; Sat; 8-10; Sauna

May 1; Fri; 7:30; An Evening of Naked Surprises

May 2; Sat; World Naked Gardening Day

May 2; Sat; 7:30; An Evening of Naked Surprises

May 8; Fri; 7:30; An Evening of Naked Surprises

May 9; Sat; 7:30; An Evening of Naked Surprises

May 9; Sat; 10-12; Board of Directors

May 10; Sun; 12-4; Work Day

May 15; Fri; 8-10; HN Swim

May 16; Sat; 12-3; Open House

May 16; Sat; 8-10; Final Sauna of the season

May 20; Mulberry season begins

May 22-25; Memorial Day Weekend

May 23; Sat; Dusk; Evening program

May 30; Sat; Dusk; Evening program

Help Wanted – Caretaker

Summer will be here soon and, once again, we contemplate all that is required to keep our special place special. We will want a responsible person to insure it remains the showplace we all enjoy. Our caretaker should be a personable individual capable of maintaining our 65 acres of paradise. Responsibilities include mowing, trimming, spraying, watering, and a seemingly endless list of tasks.

This is a wonderful (and fun) opportunity for someone who is handy and may be retired, between jobs, or looking for summer employment. If you know of someone who may be good in this position, have them contact us.

Our caretaker should be personable, able to work with a minimum of supervision and capable of performing the many and varied tasks required.

Naturism: Prevention For Pregnancy?

It is being asserted in a report by British naturism to the Scottish government that increasing teenage pregnancies are the fault of prudery. It is asserted that a more relaxed attitude to the naked body could cut the number of unplanned babies born to young girls.

They point to Denmark and the Netherlands where the incidence of teenage pregnancies is much lower, and where prudery about the body is also much less than it is in Great Britain. A spokesman for the naturist's report stated that, "There is strong evidence that conventional attitudes towards the human body contribute significantly to a wide range of problems, some of them serious, but there is incredible reluctance to face the implications."

He added, "Governments, authority figures and social and community leaders should accept that the human body is not something to be ashamed of or embarrassed about and that being more open about it would benefit society."

While your editor is sympathetic to this appeal by British Naturism for greater acceptance of the naked human body, more is needed to be truly convincing. For example, reference to objective evidence from scientific research is crucial when making so bold a claim. Simply pointing to the lower unwed teen birth rates of other countries and saying it is due to less societal prudery is ridiculous.

No evidence was offered to link or even correlate these two facts was offered, much less was evidence offered that one caused the other. Yet, the spokesman's comments seemed to imply a causal relationship. Unless the body of the report cites scientific studies that either correlate or confirm causation of prudery and higher teen pregnancy rates, the question must remain open as to what does explain them.

One reader in fact offered another cause that on the face of it may explain British teen pregnancy rates, but has nothing to do with prudery. He suggests that the government cash benefits given young women with children, is in fact an incentive to have babies out of wedlock. While a possible explanation, it also is presented without any scientific support. It is possible that there are other explanations than these two that are more central to understanding teen pregnancy rates. That remains to be seen.

The point to keep in mind is that most difficult human problems seldom resolve to one explanation or one simple solution. Naturism is both a philosophy and way of life. Mere nudity can be devoid of both and does not in itself cause people to become more moral or noble. The context makes all the difference. One has only to look at the whole range of pornography on one hand and on the other, the exploitative practices of media and commerce to know this.

In summation, all naturists agree that prudery about the naked body is inherently negative and has negative consequence for individuals and society. It is believed that prudery in all forms diminishes respect for ourselves, giving rise to unreasonable insecurities about the body leading to a variety of negative behaviors. Naturists believe that simple nudity is both chaste and modest when practiced in keeping with naturist principles. Naturists believe that there are great benefits to be gained by both sexes spending time together in daily activities which expand the male/female relationship beyond only that of sexual contact and toward mutual respect and equality. There is in fact some scientific research to support these contentions, but much more is needed. [Ed.]

From The Mail Bag

Dear Lake Edun,

I camped for 3 weeks on a private 460 Acer sight of a friend of mine for trade for carpentry work. I thought I could spend a great time reading and writing and being with nature. One day I happen to go outside after a bath with my towel on and the wind blew my towel off as I stood on the back deck. With hills on all sides of me I was not concern.

OMG in that one simple moment I felt a rush of freedom and liberty. My first response was to look around, and then I put the towel across my shoulder and started walking around a little. I was captured and loved it and one thing led to another and I found myself bathing in the stream, hiking through the trees and up all the hills and later spent 3 of the days totally necked.

I was so exhilarated, and as a man (45 now) feeling this, I was enveloped with love and beauty and universal spiritual acceptance and belonging such that I have never experienced nor imagined I could feel. I danced necked around the camp fire and in the rain. I was by myself and with the world.

– ModstNatrst

Dear Lake Edun,

Due to the many differences of OPINIONS between myself and the land owner, this will probably be my last article in the Bare Facts. I joined Lake Edun about 6 years ago with a friend. Since that time I have really tried to do things that would improve, or attract new folks to come and enjoy what was to be shared. I have given freely of my time, even at the sacrifice of my own personal income.

I have greeted many fine folks that really are awesome people. Many have fallen to the wayside even though they said they enjoyed their experience. We have lost members at a drastic rate, some moving out of the area, some just have other things to do in their spare time. Others may have stopped because of the economy. Yet others left because of

the trouble with the County. Some I am sure have their own reason for never coming back.

The board in the last few years has strived mightily to stop the drop off without much success. This is not because we as a board have not tried different ideas. Last year we saw a lot of new changes in the land making it better in hopes of folks seeing that we truly were trying to do what we felt was best for the foundation and its members. I also worked closely with Dan and his wife who also gave freely of their time for Lake Edun, even when he was not being paid. Tony was a great asset to the lake as a caretaker also.

I say farewell to the many fine folks I have met as well as associated with in my coming and going to the Lake Edun property. Many who I wish I was still in contact with, and to those I will stay in contact as personal friends no matter what happens. For those that would like to contact me please ask for my phone number or address from my friends or by email. I am in the process of trying to buy a new home so that I will have more room, and even be able to entertain friends. Most of you know I love to cook for friends as you have shared what I and Susan T. have brought and cooked. I am not a greedy or selfish person by any means.

Nuff Said!

My Thanks to the good folks.

– John S.

The Loss Of Uncontroversial Nakedness

“The whole point of a steam room is to purify yourself, not sit in a puddle of sweat in your Speedos.”

So begins a compelling essay on the changing scene in which body shame is not only rearing its ugly head, but appears to be devouring a whole generation. As evidence of this, a 2007 travel brochure for a US cruise company is exhibit 1. It was specially doctored to suit the sensibilities of the target clientele. In this case the British.

In the brochure was a picture of a group relaxing in the onboard sauna, but digitally given a cover-up. The original picture showed the sauna occupants longing naked, but now they wear computer-generated swimwear.

As it originally appeared, no frontal nudity was on display. Care was taken to indicate no sexual tension between the models. Still, bikini straps were placed on a woman whose back was turned away from the camera just to lower the “indecent” quotient.

Apparently it was feared that the suggestion of communal nudity would be enough to send the British around the bend. The company explains that many Brits feel more comfortable with something on. Fearing the loss of business, the company is considering instituting a “clothing requirement” for the ship sauna.

Of course, wearing anything in a sauna is heresy to any sauna aficionado. The Swedes both laugh and feel disgust that anyone would wear a swimsuit into a sauna, “Like keeping your socks on in the shower.”

Historically, Britain has large public saunas built in the 1930's based on the model of the Turkish bath. However, as one modern visitor to the bath observed, “the greatest pleasure to be had is the atmosphere of sisterhood, and that

depends, in large part, on nakedness. All female life is there: pink and brown, nubile and wrinkly, pierced, tattooed, corpulent and lean.” She observed that there was no staring, but you see it all. To her, this acted like a balm for the soul. “It’s a communal statement of trust and acceptance: here I am, with all my peculiar bits and pieces, different from you but in essence just the same.” What a lovely thought.

Unfortunately things have changed. The atmosphere is different. Now all the young women are wearing bikinis. Suddenly the essay writer says she froze in the doorway, her hands automatically covering her breasts. The women’s conversation stopped as they stared at her, and suddenly she saw her body through their judgmental eyes.

She analyzed the experience and concluded that physical self-consciousness is infectious. She believes that men don’t tend to suffer from this as much because they are immunized against it in childhood through locker room experiences with nudity. Would that this were still true. Apparently she doesn’t know that the times are a changing for boys also. However, she believes that girls are brought up in mortal shame of their own bodies and learn early on how to get undressed without exposing an inch of skin.

Paradoxically, it’s fashionable now to hear complaints about the excess of female flesh on display with giant cleavages on billboards and G-stringed cover girls on magazine covers. Sex is everywhere, it’s true, but nakedness – uncontroversial nakedness is a dying art.

The problem with all this excessive modesty is that it ceases to be just a personal choice. It imposes itself on other people. For example, when a veiled woman walks past on the street, there is the almost automatic worry that the veiled woman may be thinking the Western dressed woman is loose. However indignantly one rejects this thought as unjustified, the doubt has been planted, even if only momentarily.

However, that is how easily female shame leaps from one body to the next. The consequence of wearing a bikini into a sauna may save you some blushes, but only by transferring your self-consciousness to others. The author advises, “Forget the embarrassment, and think of the collective good: go naked for the sisterhood.”

What this writer is discussing is indeed a cultural shift, especially from the free-wheeling 60's and 70's. The rising tide of body acceptance begun in pre WWI Germany and spread around the world is now in full retreat. However, that doesn’t mean that lots of flesh isn’t on display – but only for sexual and commercial purposes.

Whatever utopian dreams of general public acceptance of nudity there were, are now not only forgotten, but appear immensely naive. Who has taught us to despise our bodies so effectively and rapidly? What nefarious force is behind it all, rolling back all the gains of naturism? Your guess is as good as mine. Obviously, fingers could be pointed at commerce that uses nudity to sell things; the entertainment industry helps in powerfully linking nudity and sex; the porn industry bears some blame; the overhang of Victorian prudery still lingers; the fashion industry does its bit in revealing and covering to add sexiness to female clothing.

The list could go on, but perhaps naturists have also had a hand in this reversing of values into a new shame and prudery. Is it possible the reduction of naturism to a passive recreation choice may be contributing to declining acceptance of social nudity? That is, originally health concerns, rejection of Victorianism, and other facets of the life reform movement motivated nudists. Nudity was part of a larger whole. Liberating the individual, male and female in relationship with one another through social nudity was an ideal to be achieved. Who promotes these ideal to society nowadays? We have been passed by in our enclaves and have no voice in challenging the new body shame. [Ed.]

Real Body Story

I recently became aware of a remarkable website that I want to pass on to you. The reason is its focus on body acceptance. <http://www.realbodystory.com/view.php?cat=1> is its address.

The principal founder of the website says its purpose is to raise awareness about the influence mothers, sisters, and peers have on body image.

The pages of Bare Facts have for years stressed the importance of body acceptance. Body acceptance has been a key concept for the Naturist Society since its founding. The harm done to women and men by the societal trend setters in the fashion and entertainment industries is legion. Yet, far too many still blindly follow their lead. They are literally pied pipers leading adults and children to self loathing, despair, and sometimes death.

The site's author describes herself as a 38 year old woman keenly aware of her facial lines and wrinkles, softening skin in areas that once were firm and effects of breast-feeding two children. She goes on to say that she's a perfect candidate for the "mommy makeover." That is, breast augmentation and a variety of other surgeries to bring back her pre-pregnancy body.

She hears about moms from the local elementary school filling the nearby plastic surgeons office as if it were like going to Starbucks. She wonders, why now is it socially acceptable and necessary to have the perfect body or face through cosmetic surgery?

The form of dissatisfaction with the body so dreadful in impact is eating disorders. The writer experienced this herself and highlights the sad struggle of her younger sister with a life threatening loss of weight. Yet, the preoccupation with cosmetic surgery also indicates the high level of unsatisfied women.

The writer wonders what kind of message we are sending to our children when we engage in the practice of outwardly expressing our body discontentment. Over the last ten years cosmetic procedures have increased by 457% costing Americans \$413.2 billion in 2007 alone.

She notes how heavily children are influenced by their parents as role models. Our children are watching. It's is an imperative that we break this cycle of dis-ease with the natural human body as it changes over time. In one study it was found that a child's negative body image behavior is "predicted by the mother's body dissatisfaction."

Like naturists, this web site has as its goal the promotion, support and endorsement of real bodies. It should be added that naturists believe in a healthy lifestyle in which care for the body is responsibly exercised. This means appropriate exercise, rest, and healthful food intake.

The origins of naturism in Germany stressed health, often advocating a largely vegetarian diet, lots of fresh air and exercise. Naturism was seen as an antidote to the unsanitary, unhealthy city and factory life in which the masses lived. While public health has vastly improved the quality of life over the last century our sedentary ways and calorie loaded diets are killing us. Unfortunately, naturists have largely forgotten the emphasis on healthful lifestyle practices the founders advocated and caved in to the practices of the larger society – too bad for all of us.

First Time Story

But all of this pales in comparison to my *ultimate* summer peril, which I now detail in the form of a travel tale, all perfectly true, I swear it. During the summer of '71, following my freshman year, I embarked on a cross-country hitchhike with my college roommate, that ultimately led us to the city of Vancouver, British Columbia.

We were informed by a friendly compatriot of a unique beach beneath the cliffs beyond the local campus of the Provincial University. It was unique in that it expressed a particular counter-culture practice of the times, that being the "return to nature" theme, or more precisely, the return to a state of *naked youth*. Not just a nudist beach, but a nudist beach of young people.

My puritanical nature was a tad stronger than that of my friend, who had bought into the movement hook, line and sinker. His power of persuasion responded with masterful arguments, erasing each of my doubts. The last straw was being branded a whimpering dog about to blow the opportunity of a lifetime, so we agreed to visit the beach the next morning.

My travel buddy's wink did little to quell my social inhibitions. He advanced to a spot at the center of the beach and began to disrobe. I was left to contend with the demons of moral conformity, only to find that standing clad amid the unclad was unbearably absurd! I shed my clothes to *avoid* embarrassment.

The remaining afternoon was spent exploiting a sense of liberation which I have never felt before or since. The tired old cliché of "You don't know 'til you've tried it" comes to mind, but the philosophical awakening goes beyond all that. The experience taught me that social interaction *au naturel* is neither embarrassing nor demeaning, and least of all promiscuous. My viewpoint was revised to give clothing more weight as an expression of vanity over necessity (unless, of course, survival precludes).

There was, however, one drawback. At dusk when we donned our clothes I learned my private parts were so sizzled with sunburn I would suffer for days! My worst nightmare is a rare melanoma that requires removal.

In reading this story of being introduced to social nudity one is struck by a number of familiar themes common to many first time stories. That is, the chance encounter; the more adventurous companion; the nearby presence of a free beach or nudist park; the inner struggle against previous beliefs about morals and nudity; then the revelation of the liberating, mind changing first time nude experience.

The point of this observation is that while every first time story is a unique experience, it also falls within a format that is thoroughly familiar. Despite what would otherwise almost be a cliché, it is always pleasing to other naturists. There is a familiarity born of rehearsing an old story made fresh by the enthusiasm of each new discoverer of the truth. In a real sense, every “first time story” is a conversion story of the veil being lifted from the eyes to suddenly become intensely aware of the world, others, and self in an entirely new light.

Can Shame Of Nakedness Be Unlearned?

Once we were all happy to walk around naked, now we're not. But can an experiment in nudity help us understand why we are so embarrassed by being seen in the buff and help shed our inhibitions? Why are we so ashamed of being seen naked? Is there something deep in human nature that finds naked skin abhorrent? Is prudishness inherited from our Victorian ancestors?

How can you explain the rebels who shun convention to spend their weekends hanging out with similar-minded nudists, insisting nothing could be more normal?

Eight ordinary people – none of them nudists – were recently brought together for an experiment to test some of the scientific theories that explain why naked bodies make us so uncomfortable or ashamed. However, it seems this shame can be unlearned – for example, the work of artist Spencer Tunick, who frequently corrals hundreds of volunteers to strip off en masse in public places for his photographs.

It's an example of how flexible our attitudes to nudity are. And it explains how nudists can carry on as normal when they're surrounded by naked people. Similarly, over a couple of days the volunteers had unlearned many of the social conventions that normally govern their life, and reached a new consensus that permitted them to be naked in each other's company.

This fits with the psychologists' theory that we are not born with a shame of nudity. Instead we learn it, as an important behavioral code that allows us to operate in human society.

Some psychologists say human gregariousness “poses a challenge... because those groups provide a source of temptation. Potentially both sexes can benefit by cheating on their partners.”

There is always amazement that what had been believed about the necessity of clothing to create the conditions for modesty and appropriate interaction between the sexes simply wasn't true! What had been taught as our natural reactions and instincts about sexuality did not turn out to be true. Men and women can gaze openly upon each other and maintain dignity, respect, and equality. Culturally determined prejudices about body shapes begin to fall away, instead the person as a person becomes of the greater importance. Who would have predicted that?

For experienced naturists, the first time story reaffirms from yet another that their experience is indeed a reality that transcends their own and similarly effects and enriches the lives of others. Here's to all and many more First Time Stories! [Ed.]

That's where our shame of nudity comes in. Over thousands of generations, we've learned that showing off a naked body sends out sexual signals that threaten the security of mating pairs. And we've chosen to agree that that is a bad thing. Shame is the ideal emotion to enforce that code of conduct.

“Nudity is a threat to the basic social contract. They have exposed their body and their sexual selves in a way that presents an opportunity for sexual behavior outside of the principal union.”

But as this code of conduct is something we learn, rather than are born with, we can re-learn it, if common consensus allows. As one of the experiment participants reflected: “One thing I think I'll take away is how easy it was to bond with complete strangers in what should really be an artificial environment and one that by all society's standards we should feel uncomfortable with.”

The following are a few of the comments made by readers of the story, some in approval and some not:

It seems obvious to me. Humans invented clothes – at first simple animal skins, to protect them from the environment (cold mostly). Then, as we got better at making clothes we became able to make clothes better fitting and began to make them more elaborate and ornate. Soon, clothes became a symbol of status – the more powerful you were the

more able you were to have better clothes made for you. If having very good clothes was a symbol of status or honor, then wearing no clothes became a symbol of poverty and shame.

There's a wonderful freedom being nude in a naturist area. Once you have swum nude you don't want to swim clothed again. Most people who are reluctant to go naked in nudist

Eight ordinary people – none of them nudists – were recently brought together for an experiment

places, wonder why they were worried after they have done it. I have no problem with nudity in clothes optional environments, pity there weren't more. I don't think though I would want people wandering around shopping centers etc nude.

In some countries it is normal to be nude in a sauna together with complete strangers and the normal accepted behavior can be completely reversed: if somebody joins a group of naked people inside the sauna and is dressed (bathrobe, swimming costume) this is regarded as being outside the norm and can be embarrassing for the dressed person.

I don't agree with the premise that "we" are "ashamed" to be naked. Neither were "we" once all happy to all walk around naked – maybe some of our ancestors were, but that's not us. A desire not to be naked is not to do with shame (where did you get that idea from?) it's to do with privacy – and keeping our bodies warm and protected. I really can't understand where you got this "shame" thing from! It's such a pity too so many reports etc use that word "we" as if we are all, without exception, included in whatever is being suggested.

Sexual harassment is bad enough as it is. If I walked around naked, I'd be wolf-whistled on every street.

The number of "scientific" theories about nudity and shame

presented in this story from England is impressive. More impressive are the contradictions between the theories and the actual observations of how humans really behave when given time to reorient themselves to mixed gender nudity. Despite the evidence, not everyone agrees as the last two comments indicate.

The proposed threat to social stability that nudity would pose is immediately contradicted by the observation that we can re-learn the code of conduct regarding sexual behavior. The good news is that the proposition that shame of nudity is not inborn, but instead is learned was confirmed.

The observation by one of the experiments participants is instructive and might well have been stated by a naturist theorist at *how easy* it was to bond with a group of strangers in an environment society says they should be uncomfortable with. How very true! Naturism works every time it's tried.

If people would pay attention to the findings of cultural anthropology regarding nudity or near nudity in tribal cultures around the world, the whole notion of an in-born sense of shame of nudity would long ago have been dropped. Instead, Western dress norms and the attendant shame of nudity is still taken as the only norm possible. [Ed.]

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