Bare Facts

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Memo From The Board

Our December meeting was held early due to the holidays and schedules of the board members to say nothing of those who must travel some distance to attend. Our members from Iowa and Nebraska were present as well as those from outside of the Topeka area.

We spent much of our time discussing the clothing-free vs clothing optional debate from last month. At Lake Edun, we have enjoyed a clothing-free policy for many years. Most of us are aware that in our culture, our choice to go without clothes is not well understood. Many websites attempt to explain the naturist perspective. However, our claims for body acceptance and that social nudity is healthy and positive for individuals goes counter to what our society believes. This preconceived notion suffuses the very fabric of society to create a clothing-compulsive culture. Unfortunately, this seems to affect women the most.

We have all talked to people who express a desire to try naturism. Many will even admit they skinny-dipped either as kids or young adults. Yet when it comes to joining us or just visiting, many fear that removing clothes in mixed company will cause everyone, especially men, to lose all control.

Over the years we have had a number of couples come to visit us at the lake where the women has been hesitant. We have no way of knowing how many couples have not visited because the woman knew about our clothing-free policy and was not prepared. For some visitors, the sense of pressure to disrobe immediately was too much for the ladies and they left. Other times they have respected our policy but were obviously not ready to "take the plunge". They may have enjoyed our company for a few hours or even the day, but after they left, did not return.

However, we are also aware that some visitors who have been reluctant to disrobe appear to visit only so they can gawk at Eduners as if we were some kind of entertainment for their sick fantasies.

After considerable discussion of all these issues, the board decided to modify our policy. In the future, because of the inordinate pressure our clothing-compulsive society places upon women, we will be clothing-optional for women on their first visit. This will allow them to enjoy the lake and sample social nudity clothed, if they wish, for their first visit. We hope this change will permit ladies to become more comfortable and get to know us to some extent before they "take the plunge".

We should add that this change in policy was instigated by a comment and request from one of our visitors. Several other issues that have come to the attention of the board in the same way. We are pleased when visitors and members take time to share their thoughts and concerns about our special place. Please don't hesitate to write Maxine about things of concern to you.

Auditions Announced For Naked Plays

The director of the second production of the Lake Edun Foundation Naked Plays, Dana McCoy announced auditions will be held in both Topeka and Lawrence. There are parts for six actors, three male and three female plus some potential extras.

Altogether, there are four one-act plays that will be produced. Each deals with issues of body acceptance from a different aspect. As a group, they will make a wonderful evening of entertainment and should do well to promote our message of body acceptance.

If you have an interest in theater or an interest in helping to promote our message, you should plan to attend one of the auditions on either Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 6-8 or Sunday, Feb. 15 from 2-4. Auditions will be held in the National Electronic Type building at 2320 S. Kansas Ave. in Topeka. Or, you may email Maxine to arrange a reading in Lawrence. In addition to on-stage talent, there are many opportunities to assist with technical, publicity, and other areas.

Long time LEF supporters and anyone involved in theater will realize the tremendous effort any theatrical presentation can be. If you are able, we hope you will volunteer to assist with this important effort. It is our opportunity to reach out to many others in the community with our message of body acceptance.

Web Site Maintenance

As Eduners know, we maintain our website, lakeedun.com so others can learn about our special place and about the joys of Naturism we take for granted. It is also a major means of outreach to those who may be curious to learn more about our lifestyle.

LEF is looking for someone who can maintain our website. This is not a particularly demanding responsibility. The site requires monthly updating to add the current issue of Bare Facts and periodic updates to other portions of the site.

If this is something you can do, please contact Maxine. It is important we find a way to address this soon.

DON'T FORGET

Activities designated HN are sponsored by Heartland Naturists

Jan 3; Sat; 3-5; Board of Directors

Jan 10; Sat; 8-10; Sauna

Jan 16; Fri; 8-10; HN Swim

Jan 24; Sat; 8-10; Sauna

Feb 7; Sat; 8-10; Sauna

Feb 10; Tues; 6-8; Auditions for naked plays-Topeka

Feb 13; Fri; 8-10; HN Swim

Feb 14; Sat; 3-5; Board of Directors

Feb 15; Sun; 2-4; Auditions for naked plays-Topeka

Feb 21; Sat; 8-10; Sauna

Adventures In Discovering Naturism

The following biographical story of a woman's discovering the joys of naturism tells a tale familiar to all of us. His explanation for her comfort while nude is brilliant in its simplicity, "Since I could forgive them their flaws, I could forgive myself my own." This is a Eureka moment!

This insight also explains much about why naturism is so psychologically beneficial and relaxing. Like this writer, many discover an increased confidence and greater appreciation of people.

The simplicity of naturism, yet the powerful effects it produces eludes the majority population. So encrusted are they by conventional wisdom, that they cannot even endure the thought of public nudity to the point of persecution both socially and legally those that would enjoy this most benign form of expressing our humanity.

Nudity did not come easily to me. But by age 24 I started vacationing regularly in Jamaica at a resort that had a "textile" beach and a nude beach. She reports that she remained in a swim suit for her first three annual visits, but always noticed that down the way, on that nude beach, people were having a lot more fun. By her fourth visit she just had to see what was going on there. She says, "I went topless with much liquid courage and realized how social nudists were." The following year she reports that, "I went nude and made friendships that have lasted 20 years."

In a voyage of self discovery, she says, "I got over myself. I learned what every toddler knows: the freedom, the comfort and the fun of going naked. By giving up culturally induced gymnophobia (fear of being naked), I relived that joy as an adult. Soon I replaced my swimsuits with my SPF collection."

She adds, "Some people say, I can't go naked; I'm too fat. But I learned that smooth roundness of fat appeals more than the indent of a swimsuit's elastic emphasizing its mush. And tan fat looks sleeker than white fat."

Some people who haven't tried nudity say, "I wouldn't want to see that person naked on the beach." "Thankfully I overcame that attitude. Most people are flawed, but nudists don't care what size or shape bodies come in, so the experience equalizes fat and skinny, old and young, gorgeous and not so gorgeous. Everyone's just there to have fun, to tan, to chat or to relax. Since I could forgive them their supposed flaws, I forgave myself my own. My confidence blossomed in all areas of my life. My appreciation of people for all their differences expanded," she reports.

She quotes a nudist acquaintance who opined that, "Nudity suggests, 'OK, I've seen what you look like on the outside, and you've seen what I look like on the outside. Now that that's over with, let's find out what each other looks like on the inside." Then adds, "That's probably why nude beaches have more socializing than the textile ones. We can't tell who anyone is until we talk to them."

The author's last observation is recognizable to all naturists, "Originally, the most difficult part of going naked was taking my clothes off. Now the hardest part is putting my clothes back on when it's time to leave."

Facebook Bans Breast-Feeding Photos

A mini revolt is underway at Facebook after photos of mothers nursing their babies were removed from their personal pages.

More than 58,000 people have joined a Facebook group called "Hey, Facebook, breastfeeding is not obscene!" to complain about the censorship. Organizers will conduct a cyber protest Saturday, asking every supporter to change his or her profile picture to an image of breast-feeding.

"We need to take our bodies back," said one of the group's administrators. "Whether there's a nipple exposed or not, female breasts, specifically in the context of breast-feeding, should not be considered obscene."

The group was set up more than a year ago after a mom got a message from Facebook saying her photos were a violation of the rules and that she risked being banned if the snap was reposted. Since then, more than 2,600 images have been posted by group members.

One spokeswoman added, "We are highly offended by Facebook's actions. I find it a very pure form of gender discrimination. We live in a culture that has hyper-sexualized woman's breasts; we would like them to leave the pictures alone."

A Facebook spokesman said it removes photos only if the entire breast is exposed. "These policies are designed to ensure Facebook remains a safe, secure and trusted environment for all users, including the many children [over the age of 13] who use the site."

Commenting on the situation a Brooklyn mom says she doesn't understand why Facebook cares. Furthermore, "The more people who see breast-feeding, the more normal it becomes. It's a natural, beautiful state to be in."

Naturally the ninnies at Facebook fall back on the shopworn refuge of the scoundrel, "It's to protect the children." However, they don't seem to give a rat's rear end about all the entries by adolescents that morbidly dwell on how miserable their lives are and contemplate suicide. That's probably protected free speech. However, give them the evil nipple, and they leap into action! [Ed.]

Nudism/Naturism

Naturists debate/lament a news story out of England about a nude flight for naturists to a German beach. The article writer repeated some of the clichéd jokes about nudity we have come to expect from the mainstream press.

I agree though, that we're reassured if we can see others as predictable. To assure ourselves that we're going to be approved of, we tend to go along with whatever fads and fashions our society has set up. That particularly includes anything related to sex, where perhaps we know that instincts are closest to the surface, and we're afraid that our rationality may slip, or be seen to slip by others.

Hence young people who are insecure about their place in society make public shows of the "right kind" of sexuality – heterosexual and limited to attractive young people, with ritualized changes in appearance required, especially for

women. Anything else might as well be the regalia of a rival tribe, to be ridiculed and at least conceptually attacked on sight. Unfortunately, part of this standard unthinking presentation involves a demand that the genitals always have to be covered, perhaps as proof that we're keeping our sexuality under control, although simultaneously making a fetish of it.

Naturists have the heretical idea that first of all, the concept of an "attractive" body is personal and not dictated by society, and there's no body that needs to be hidden; in fact we say that the diversity of human bodies is a joy and a wonder.

Secondly, we say that sexuality isn't affected by the genitals being visible. We say that we can choose to act sexually or not, regardless of how we're dressed, and that it's an insult to our bodies and our minds to say we have to keep some parts covered up.

These are difficult concepts for most people to grasp, and they go against some things which are consistently assumed in our society, yet those things are never explicitly talked about. Merely to suggest that these assumptions can be challenged makes people uncomfortable, as few of us have the vocabulary or the patterns of thought to make a dialog possible. Hence, the response to naturist concepts is embarrassment, and attempts at jokes which reassure people that naturists are foolish eccentrics, while the world continues to run on its familiar course.

I think the reason we're the subject of these lame attempts at humor is because there's not a balanced representation of nudism/naturism in the media. The good thing is that because of the Net, we have much more influence on the media because often we are the media. What we need to do is get more nude-positive articles, commentaries, and trip reports onto various websites. There are all kinds of sites that let anyone post reviews of places to visit.

When we go on a nude vacation, or even just visit our local nude beach, why do we just post our experience on nudist sites? If we truly believe being naked is for everyone, we need to let everyone know. The more positive reports of nudity people see the more respect we will get from the public, the business community, and the media.

Also, nudism/naturism needs to be about more than just laying in the sun. We need to show that we're good citizens. Partnering with environmental groups to adopt a nude beach and keep it clean and safe is a great example. More nudist resorts should participate in the sustainability movement. It's a natural fit, especially since nudism started out with a focus on the environment and personal health!

I'm not convinced, actually, that the article was that bad. I agree that the best article would be one that is truly positive. However, failing that, I still think this article is helpful to our cause.

One of the biggest problems for nudism is that the general population doesn't talk, or even think about it. It is just this unspeakable evil. Yet none understands why. If a person is asked, they can't give a coherent answer why, yet it is considered wrong. Even asking such a question might be

considered offensive.

Well, this article helps in several ways. First, it speaks about what is supposedly unspeakable. Just having articles about nudism read by the general public has to help our cause. It removes the hidden aspect of nudity. It gives permission to talk about nudism if they talk about the article.

Second, it makes people think about nudism. Even with the joking attitude, if a non-nudist reads this article, it's bound to be thought provoking. Who are these nudists? Why do they want to take a nude flight rather than just having an orgy at someone's house? Why is the airline catering to these people? These questions are not at all thought provoking to nudist (they're kind of dumb), but they encourage a non-nudist to think of nudism outside of the stereotype.

Third, even though he's making fun of nudism, there are positive aspects that can't help but show through. Nudism isn't about sex. It is a legitimate interest that the tourism industry caters to, (at least to some extent).

I don't claim he was trying to help nudism. He was making fun of us. Yet in spite of that, I think that article was helpful. That's my opinion, anyways.

Validation

A short film that can be viewed on the internet is highly recommended to the readers of *Bare Facts*. The website captions the video as, "The magic of looking for the best in people." The 15 minute film has been shown at 34 film festivals and has won 17 awards.

It is a fictional story with a terrific message. Obviously, there is over simplification for the purposes of the story line, but the point made is still valid.

The film's hero is a parking garage attendant in a mall that validates the parking stub for two hours for free parking. Little do the unwary and generally bedraggled customers know it, but they are going to get far more than the two hours of free parking.

Each patron presenting their parking stub receives a sincere compliment from the attendant. Startled by his kind words, each in turn starts to smile and walks away with a bounce in their step. Soon word spreads and so many people park at the mall that a line forms, rather than everyone heading for the shops. It's a real ripple effect, but see for yourself at: http://www.Flixxy.com/validation-short-film.htm?a=0 [Ed.]

Items We Need

See our website at lakeedun.com for more details.

- Non-motorized boats
- Metal Barrels
- Lawn or Lounge Chairs
- Wooden Cable Spools
- Aluminum cans, etc.

"Being natural and matter-of-fact about nudity prevents your children from developing an attitude of shame or disgust about the human body. If parents are very secretive about their bodies and go to great lengths to prevent their children from ever seeing a buttock or breast, children will wonder what is so unusual, and even alarming, about human nudity." - Dr. Lee Salk, Psychiatrist

Dear Annie

Every now and then someone writes an anguished letter to and advice columnist on the topic of being shocked and embarrassed by someone's nudity. Also once in awhile, the columnist gives a rational response. This time the advice given is so-so.

Not content to allow an opportunity to educate pass, long time naturist Bill Pennington wrote a well reasoned response. I don't know if Bill's letter actually was published in the paper, but you can read it below for your edification. I know Bill would be pleased if you are able to make use of his remarks sometime.

The headline above your recent column read, "Teenager Mortified By Nude Party-Goers" as though it was something other than what it actually was.

"Dear Annie,

"We recently had a party as a send-off for our daughter who is leaving for college. 60 family members and friends were invited.

"My two brothers let their 8, 6, and 4 year olds swim naked. [Likely a completely legal activity in that state because of their age]. One of their wives took off her bikini top to nurse her baby. [A completely legal activity in Michigan].

"My daughter was completely shocked and could not sleep that night because she had been so embarrassed in front of her friends.

"The next day my husband found out that both of his brothers and their families had joined a nudist resort.

"Right now, I don't ever want these family members to visit again. My husband insists it's a 'one time thing.' Please tell me if I'm over reacting. -- Angry In Michigan"

The Response: "Dear Michigan,

"We can only imagine your daughter's mortification to have her friends see the relatives au natural. They showed poor judgment and lack of consideration for others. And, at a public lake, they could have been arrested for indecent exposure. However, it's not the end of the world, and if your husband strongly reminds his brothers to confine their nudist activities to the private resort, it may not happen again. We'd give them one more chance."

Our letter to you; as a responsible opposing viewpoint.

We would like to comment on your response to "Angry In Michigan" who complained of her daughter being "completely shocked" over seeing where she came from and what she herself is -- a human body. We are all just human bodies and we all came out of a human body.

God made us unto His image and He was pleased with what He saw. Since our bodies were made unto God's image, we can see no way that what we are could be offensive, mortifying, or in poor taste, especially as it pertains to innocent children or a nursing mother. Anyone who thinks ill of that is merely a maladjusted or ill mind at work.

It's a less than healthy society that convinces some people that there's something "indecent" or "offensive" about the life giving, nurturing parts of a human body. The fact the daughter was "mortified" strongly points out what kind of body image she has, most likely learned from her parents.

In the less than healthy society we live in, hints of nudity are used to sensationalize, to titillate and to sell product, but the natural human form is treated as taboo, fueling a sick multibillion dollar porn industry that degrades mostly women and creates porn addicts. Porn is not caused by viewing the natural human form; rather it is caused by NOT being able to see the natural human form in non sexual circumstances.

Naturism, the practice of a way of life in greater fidelity to nature, characterized by non sexual nudity in social life, with the intention of encouraging self respect, respect for others, and for the environment, teaches people that there's nothing wrong with the human body.

Wrote one pen pal: "I have seen naturism help individuals heal from pornography. Naturism provides positive, wholesome images of the human body. Naturist children have their curiosity about the human body satisfied in safe, controlled environments under adult supervision instead of sneaking peeks at pornography with friends.

Adults who finally experience the difference between pornographic images of the human body and innocent images available through naturism can see the ugliness in the pornographic image. It begins to lose its appeal. . Yet I can't share these discoveries with my fellow parishioners.

As I've sat in endless lesson after lesson, sermon after sermon on the ills of pornography and watched the efforts of church leaders to combat this problem largely fail, I anguish to know I have a simple solution that can help many people heal, but I have to keep it to myself because the church leaders would not approve." - D. Michael Martindale

Additionally, we feel your advice was off the mark in that it was probably totally legal for children to be in their birthday suits because of their age. And Annie, you REALLY missed the mark about the breast feeding mother. As far as we know, it's legal in Michigan (and most other states and countries) for a mother to breast feed a youngster in public. Where were you on Women's Rights regarding that one?

As a world leader, the USA has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy, STD's, violence, and sex crime against woman, and suicide. In countries where the human body isn't treated as shameful, such as France, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries, those rates are much lower. It might interest you to know the teen pregnancy rate among naturist (and nudist) women in this country is less than one tenth the national average, which last we read was higher than 10%.

Please update your thinking about the human body and a woman's right to breast feed; people listen to your advice, so we'd like to see it be as sound as possible. Thank you.

As God Made Us, Bill Pennington

Attracting New Naturists

A lot of people have agonized over the dilemma of the so called, "Graying of naturism." This is a concern shared by both AANR and TNS for the last few years. The observation is that the average age of the membership is rising. Fewer young adults and younger families are joining.

Numerous suggestions have been floated as to why this is the case, including the thesis that this is an age of the non joiner. That is, younger people are failing to join a whole range of organizations in the numbers they did in the past. Naturism is just showing a decline in more youthful membership as part of a general sociological phenomenon.

Related to this is the suggestion that there are a lot of people that participate in going to nude beaches, skinny-dipping, etc., but don't think of themselves as nudists/naturists or wish to identify as such by joining a club or national organization.

Others have suggested that factors such as the large numbers of older people present just turn younger people off. That is, young people just don't like, or are disgusted by seeing all those fat, wrinkly old people.

Some have suggested the high cost of joining a club or resort keeps young people away. The economic pressures, paying college loans, starting a career, getting married, buying a house, etc., leave them without disposable income for clubs.

Another suggestion is that young people like to party and the usual decorum of naturist clubs offering such sedate activities as volleyball and swimming are just too dull. Besides, they claim the old timers don't approve of the loud music young people like, nor are traditional naturists approving of a more relaxed sexual atmosphere that young people are believed to be seeking.

Finally, some throw up their hands and say, "In truth, we have no idea why younger people are not joining and what it would take to attract them to naturism." It is true. There currently is no empirical study that answers the question of why younger people are joining naturism in fewer numbers.

The final of a series of four articles, (March 2008) surveying the origins of naturism in Germany suggested that naturists have largely left behind the driving motivations that inspired the founders.

Nowadays, recreation and a bit of emphasis on body acceptance are about all that remains. However, reviewing the German origins of naturism suggests looking back to the various strands of the Life Reform Movement might prove instructive. Each strand advanced a program of reform which included social nudity. Reevaluating their reformist agendas might be of inspiration in determining what might be done to reinvigorate the contemporary naturist movement.

The following analysis by a veteran naturist of what it would take to attract younger people to naturism strikes me as being more on target than anything else I have read. His thinking is much more in keeping with what has been advanced in the pages of Bare Facts.

What he says is as follows:

"I know a number of us have children in the young-adult age group. We could ask them, or look at what they choose to get involved in, and maybe get an idea why they typically don't have an interest in naturism. Young people's involvement (mostly lack of) in nudism doesn't seem to have anything to do with whether the parents were/are doing it or not.

Certainly at the Naturist Society's Eastern Naturist Gathering, there's a Town Hall Meeting every time, and every time, there's a call for ideas on attracting younger people. Suggestions do get offered, but really I think everyone feels as though there isn't much naturist organizations can do.

I get the sense that if people here like parties; they tend to say, "Offer parties for the young folks!" That's not what I'd say: My suggestion would be, "Offer them an idealistic philosophy, a sense of involvement with the outdoors, while being anti-consumerist and anti-fashion, all while having fun. But I have to admit that's my own outlook and I can't promise anyone would necessarily share it. Honestly, I don't think that nudist resorts as they exist now, whether they're glitzy or slightly ramshackle, are the places young people want to go. But I don't know what the alternative might be."

We too struggle with the issue of growth in our membership, as growth is the key to moving ahead with desirable development that will enhance Lake Edun. Development, however, that will retain the beauty and natural feel of the property.

Like this writer, the LEF takes naturism as an idea seriously. We remain committed to the essential central feature of naturism as so ably expressed by Cec Cinder in his book, *The Nudist Idea*. He states, "...there did remain one essential point upon which all nudists, in all countries remained united in commitment, a hot, living core which might be called the genius of nudism – I mean, of course, mixed social nudity: men, women and children together, all naked and none ashamed. It is just possible that this nudist idea is the single greatest idea of modern times" He sees social nudity in the future as being able to transform human society in a way more powerful than does technology, depending instead on, "...a subtle change in human relationships" (pg. 27-28).

Perhaps Cec is utopian in his forecast and naturism will remain a minority subculture. Regardless, this vision has merit. Generally it is idealists and visionaries that seem able to motivate social movements that have an impact on the greater society. The pioneers of naturism were all this, plus they had some concrete ideas for reform that struck a chord in many hearts. It would appear naturism and reform have been connected from the very beginning. Every age is in need of its reformers to stand against whatever tends to devalue our humanity or needlessly hamper human freedom.

There are a lot of alienated, hurting people in society that need what naturism has to offer, but they just don't know about it, or a hostile culture hinders their opportunity to experience it.

The October, 2008 issue of *Bare Facts* documented the efforts of massage therapists to address these needs. Unfortunately, like naturists, they too are under an unjustified cloud of suspicion as being a cover for sexual activity. They too have to educate society about their legitimate practices.

Like naturists, massage therapists also stress body acceptance and take a non judgmental attitude toward their clients. One massage therapist stated that from her initial contact with a client she, "...starts talking to them in a way that's understanding and compassionate. When they show up, they show up with whatever they have. It doesn't matter if they're missing an arm, or have a deformed hand; the person who is standing there desires to move forward."

I believe that this is a key concept we at Lake Edun have to stress to all, both members and guests. We care about you as whole person. We have to maintain an awareness that we all are needy in some manner, both in our physical and inner selves. We all are looking for acceptance and place of safety from the outside world in all its demands and phoniness. In short, what people are looking for is validation.

The membership of Lake Edun is well known for being friendly. Perhaps we take this for granted. Whatever the case, we would do well to sharpen our understanding of validation and renew our efforts to welcome all those that grace our special place.

Validation includes being friendly – introducing ourselves and expressing gratitude that someone is visiting, but also more. It includes showing genuine interest in the person and calling attention to a strength they possess. This is not empty flattery, but a sincere observation you have noticed about that person. It involves "reading" people and reflecting back to them what you see. This is tremendously powerful and always appreciated.

While we wrestle with the bigger philosophical and programmatic questions of the direction of naturism, we all can offer kindness, compassion and respect daily; validating both our naturist values and each person we meet. It really doesn't matter so much what facilities we have or how sophisticated our programming, what really counts is satisfying human relationships that meet our need to be validated. In the end, that is what we can do to make all people, not just young people feel attracted to naturism. [Ed.]

Lake Edun Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 1982 Topeka, KS 66601-1982 (785) 478-BARN			Membership Application Change of Address Form Please Print
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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 <i>Bare Facts</i> is included with membership. A subscription only to <i>Bare Facts</i> 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.	

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