Bare Facts

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January 1, 2014

Official Publication of the Lake Edun Foundation, Inc. Box 1982; Topeka, KS 66601 • e-mail: nude@lakeedun.com • Website: www.lakeedun.com

38° 58' 7" North; 95° 47' 56" West

The Buff Astronomer

Transition between two great astronomy years is upon us. In this last year we have had the appearance and disappearance of the "Comet of the Century", a meteoroid explosion over Chelyabinsk Russia, drilling on Mars locating clay in the rock that could have been habitable in ancient days, and discoveries about cosmic rays, the Milky Way black hole, and solving mysteries about the Earth's radiation belt. This was combined with some pretty great viewing of stars, constellations and planets at our part of Paradise. All in all a very good year for the Buff Astronomer and you.

This year has very good prospects for viewing. Heading the list: In January, Jupiter, the largest planet should be visible all night. Just north of Orion, it will reside in the constellation Gemini, rising in the evening and setting in the morning. Those with binoculars or very good eyes can see transitions of Jupiter's most visible 4 moons, Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto. With telescopes big enough to resolve the Red Storm and with patience, you will see Jupiter changing each night. The rotation time of the large planet is about 10 hours. What you see early will differ with what is seen before sunrise.

As the evening progresses, both Mars and Saturn will climb higher before dawn. Venus starts January as the Evening Star, goes behind the sun, and then reappears as the Morning Star. Mercury doesn't show up until mid-January, but on January 31 will have its greatest elongation of orbit, visible with binoculars 30 minutes after sunset. Lastly January's meteor shower, the Quadrantids, will peak in the first week, showing between 60 and 120 meteors an hour in predawn hours.

Please enjoy this year and this month, peeking in with the Buff Astronomer.

Thank You, Dave

Many of our long-time supporters have fond memories of the wonderful Halloween Parties and Annual Meetings we had at Dave Palrang's eclectic home in East Topeka. Dave always looked forward to our parties and made a great effort to roll out the carpet for the Lake Edun Foundation.

Almost as good as his legendary hospitality was his incredible hot tub. Half a dozen Eduners could enjoy its relaxing spell at the same time; working in shifts, it satisfied all comers. It always made for a memorable event.

Because of health concerns, Dave was unable to host our Halloween Party for the past two years. Many commented on our collective loss. We wished Dave well and were pleased our friends at Truck Henge agreed to fill the void.

We learned recently that Dave passed away shortly after Christmas. Wherever his gentle spirit is now, we are confident his many good deeds will be remembered, and missed, by the many friends he left behind.

Thank you, Dave, for being a friend of LEF.

From The Board

The first month of 2014 will be an important one for your Board of Directors. We very much appreciate your participation in the annual survey, and those very important data are being mined to help us understand your interests and wishes.

We listen to everyone who participated, even those who did not visit last year for various reasons, because we want this year to be a booming one for our unclad masses. Several projects are underway by the Winter Warriors as weather permits, including new trails, minor changes to some trails on the west side and trying to open a connection between the north road and the west side.

Important additions to the Board have been made, and an emphasis on family activities is on the agenda for the new year. We especially invite those with families to consider joining us as members this year. Families will have strong advocates on the board. The board will be working on a schedule of activities, including some new offerings suggested in the survey. If you have more to share, please do so in an e-mail reply to Grace's sendings which will be sent on to the board.

Reading in 'N', the Naturist magazine (a TNS publication), we see that several groups throughout the country have clad monthly meetings at a local restaurant to let people get to know members in a 'safe,' textiled environment. What do you think about this? What has been the effect on the changes in non-member visit policy? What was the effect of having only one Port-aPotty near the stage? Why was the tenting experience so little used? Why were there several usually popular events that had no takers – Drum Circle, Tye-Dye, and Music nights?

What would induce you to come more and to join us in the great outdoor activities that belonging to Lake Edun Foundation brings to you?

Please let us know, we want your participation.

DON'T FORGET

Jan 3; Fri; 8-10; Sauna Jan 11; Sat; 8-10; Sauna Jan 12; Sun; 4-6; Board of Directors Jan 14; Tue; 7-9; Sauna Jan 17; Fri; 8-10; Sauna Jan 25; Sat; 8-10; Sauna Jan 29; Wed; 7-9; Sauna Feb 1; Sat; 6-8; Sauna Feb 5; Wed; 7-9; Sauna Feb 16; Sun; 4-6; Board of Directors Feb 16; Sun; 7-9; Sauna Feb 21; Fri; 8-10; Sauna Feb 26; Wed; 7-9; Sauna

Common Sense On Nudity

Writing in her college newspaper, this author reflected on a World Naked Gardening Day article sent by her sister. At first she was excited by the idea, but quickly came to earth, fearing the consequences should she actually garden nude.

This led to considering possible legal ramifications should she be seen by some offended neighbor. But what does it mean in law to be offended by something that doesn't actually cause any harm beyond some personal discomfort. She then asks, "So what is it about nudity that makes people feel so shameful and anxious?"

She speculates that for many people nudity upsets them due to equating nudity and sex. Beyond this, she notes concerns for hygiene and protection from the environment that are common sense and don't need to be enforced by law.

What made me appreciate this writer is the following: "I believe that nudity has the potential to facilitate better attitudes on body image and sex. Outlawing your natural form in public causes people to be ashamed of their bodies, and in turn perpetuates the cycle of sexual confusion and shame. People ogling at the naked body does not spur from nudity, but from a puritanical school of thought that demonizes the very essence of what it means to be human.

"As a fashion design major and apparel business owner, I am as big a clothing lover as they come." Then she makes the brilliant point that had me cheering when she said, "However, my interest in fashion is how it supplements a person physically and artistically, not in how it covers something that is supposedly short of perfect. The change would demand a huge psychological shift in seeing nudity as commonplace, and not a form of forbidden fruit. I am not talking about a full-fledge shift into a constant state of undress (that would be impractical on many levels), but just the acceptability of me sitting in my garden, as exactly the person that I am."

This is exactly right! Clothing is functional and aesthetic. It is not to be thought of as necessary to cover what is imperfect, disgusting, or shameful. Instead, get over seeing nudity as a problem and allow each person to make a common sense choice of how much clothing they want to wear.

Obviously the clothing obsessive will predict all sorts of dreadful consequences as they will cling to the notion that the unclothed body causes untold harm. It's a naturist's dream that society will wake up one day and not see the naked body as "forbidden fruit," or repulsive, but merely a state of being. No big deal and certainly not harmful. Just the person exactly as they are. [Ed.]

Too often, common sense is very uncommon. Learn more about common sense on nudity <u>here</u>.

In The News

A topless photo of a Missouri mother and her 14-year-old daughter sitting in their hot tub was transmitted to students at two local high schools via the photo-sharing app Snapchat.

The teen's younger sister, despite being told by her mother to delete the photo shared it with someone over Snapchat, which deletes the photo within moments of its first viewing.

That is, unless the recipient takes a screen grab and starts sending it to friends.

The accused woman insists she was not posing at all. She says she was merely getting out of the hot tub when the picture was taken.

The mom has been charged with endangering the welfare of a minor. Police said she "knowingly posed for a topless photograph with her 14-year-old daughter ... covering up their nipples."

The mother's defense attorney states, "It sounds to me as though this is much ado about nothing and it's way overblown." She added that she thinks the rush to judgment is unfair. "From what I understand, she had her picture taken and that was disseminated. She didn't take the picture. She didn't disseminate it. She's a victim in this."

The county prosecutor counters saying, "The issue here is the fact the daughter was 14 and the mother was clearly present and involved when the photo was taken."

The mother could face probation or a year in jail.

The Post Dispatch carried the story here.

How come no one has come up with a video series entitled, Prosecutors Gone Wild! Seems to me this would fit thw profile. It's a crime "in the eye of the beholder", and officials in this case seem to be doing a lot of assuming to make the charges they are making.

Commenting on this incident TERA asks, "Even if there's more to this incident, does putting your arm across your nipples make a photo illegal? Or suggest some wrong was done, or something was done wrongly? (Whether the mother wanted or didn't want the photo posted, or knew or didn't know it would be, are different questions.)"

Good questions. Visit the TERA (TopFree Equal Rights Association) website to learn more about their good work.

An Awakening

So often naturists do their best to explain to a textile outsider what it is that makes nudity so intensely liberating and enjoyable. When words are exhausted and the skeptic remains unconvinced, the usual final naturist claim is, "You have to try it to understand it."

It may well be that, Try it, you'll like it!" doesn't always turn out that way. As is also said, naturism isn't for everyone. However, for some people their first experience of social nudity is electrifying. It is a life altering event that has a spiritual quality in which old assumptions fall away and a new reality emerges.

Anyone who has had that reaction to social nudity knows what this means. The following blog post describes just such a transforming encounter with clothes freedom. Enjoy! [Ed.]

When you lose your clothes, you find yourself!

This has been a year of many firsts for me and getting naked has been one of them. By what would seem to have been pure chance, an innocent encounter with naturism has turned out to be a life altering, spiritual experience that has made me, I believe, a better human being. Merely sheddin clothes not only left me physically naked and laid bare, but it also enabled me to slough off prejudices, assumptions and personal conventions that had been with me for so many years.

The openness and freedom of being naked with myself and others caused me to be a more open and less assuming person. Rather than relying on strategies learned long ago, I began to re-examine the very essence of what made me ... me. I had never thought that simple physical nakedness could lead to such spiritual openness and awareness. It never occurred to me that clothing was not only physically restrictive, but also so spiritually restrictive. I feel so much more now that I am indeed a part of the stuff that makes up the stars and the universes. What a great adventure it has been!

One response to this post is included below. Naturists identify with the profound feelings the blogger described.

Hi Dennis Thanks. I don't think it's an electrostatic charge at all, but the quite conversely the clothing is a physical, social and spiritual insulator. The first time I felt the warmth of the sun on my genitals I was astounded by the life force that surged through me. Thanks for commenting.

The entire story is <u>here</u>.

Teach Your Children Well

The letter below is instructive and may well represent what happens in many naturist families. Children raised by naturist parents have no problems with nudity in the family or at a naturist venue until around the age of puberty.

Somewhere in the middle school years, many of these children pull away and abandon social nudity. In many instances it has to do with a normal part of adolescent development involving seeking identification with their peers and independence from parents.

Other naturist parents have pointed to this as the main issue for their children. They want to spend time with friends in their peer group who have no naturist connections. This is understandable if there are few opportunities for a naturist peer group to form.

As the parent below points out, his children were teased by peers about their naturism. With few exceptions, most of us spend much of our lives in the textile world where there is no support for non-sexual social nudity. Couple this with all the changes going on in puberty and an almost desperate seeking for peer approval; it is not surprising the youth sacrifice naturism for peer associations.

As adults, we take for granted that our values will be passed on to our children simply because they are exposed to them for years. We forget our own struggles when deciding who we are and what we believe. Further, we underestimate the power of popular culture to overwhelm our children. It is no simple task to instill values on a whole range of issues confronting youth.

With this in mind, we as naturists have to not only live our naturist values, we have to explicitly talk about what it means to be a naturist in the face of a culture hostile to naturism. Youth want and need something to believe in that helps them resist the crowd. They also need guidance in understanding that just because the majority is shocked by social nudity, that doesn't make the majority right.

It is possible that one of the more important gifts we can give our children is to think for themselves and not be intimidated by the peer group. This is true whether teaching the value of honesty, courage, work, religion, or body acceptance through social nudity. [Ed.]

"We started [family naturism] from the get go! We were young, 20... though we rarely wore clothes at home, during this time, we never really considered ourselves "nudists."

Once our oldest was born, we had already had a long-standing nude life but it was confined to our home (apartments at the time). We just continued to live as we did as our oldest got older and when she was potty trained ... she just followed suit because my wife never put anything on her when we were at home. . .

We bought our first home right after #2 daughter was born. We now had a backyard to venture out into and we had several different types of inflatable pools, till we finally had an above ground pool large enough for all of us . . .

We just lived without clothing and never made much of it ... it was just the way we lived and the girls liked it. It was never forced because ... nudity at our home was and always has been ... normal.

The only thing we would change is that we would have forced ourselves to visit a couple of clubs where we could find other families with children so our girls could have "nudist" friends as well as textile. Like others, our daughters both moved away from living nude and skinny dipping around the ages of 10 and 12.

Their textile friends ruined it for us and for them with the constant teasing about how gross it was to be naked around their parents and we had no support group to help us through that period.

I think a nudist lifestyle needs to be discussed and re-enforced so their clothed friends do not steer them in the wrong direction. Visit clubs and resorts, seek non-landed clubs and other families to socialize with so the children have a mix of friends to socialize with, both nudist and textile and as always ... talk to them about their fears and concerns ... and who to talk to about their nude life and who not to talk to ...

After 20+ years away from the lifestyle, our daughter's both returned to dabble in nudism and are exposing their children to skinny dipping, hot tubing and vacationing in the nude. It's re-enforced here when they visit because we do not hide our nudity, although we do not live as we normally do when they are here. They aren't that adjusted to "living" nude as they are more "recreational and vacation" type nudies."

Interested in introducing your family to naturism. This story came from the Skinnytrippers forum on Google. You may apply for membership and learn more <u>here</u>.

My protests are human-rights oriented. It's not about sexual nudity or free love or taking drugs and jumping over fires in forests. If anything, it's spiritual. I just think you should have the right to walk down the street naked. I firmly believe that naked people should have equal rights with clothed people. **Vincent Bethell**

On Prudishness

"Human prudishness still baffles me. I will never fully comprehend how a society that is so intensely preoccupied with sex is equally cowed by nudity."

Quote from DC comic book character, Starfire

The body is a fairly simple, straight forward package that we all possess. What complicates everything is human cognition. By that I mean what we think. In this case, what we think about the body – our body, everybody's body.

Of course our thoughts about the body are shaped by our life experiences mediated through our particular cultural and language tradition. With culture comes layer upon layer of abstract meanings and values that inform our thinking about the body in quite specific ways. Each layer takes us further from the raw physicality of the body.

Add to this mix our emotional life of fear, love, anger, sadness, happiness, hurt, and shame. Next, throw in the imperfect balance of power and control we experience in relationship with everyone else in our life.

It's no wonder we are so conflicted about the body.

The course of human history goes back many thousands of years. Of these thousands of years we have only now begun to discern the barest of outlines of what our ancient ancestors accomplished in filling this planet with their descendants.

More detailed writings and pictures only help us know a little more about the last few thousand years in a few specific places in the world. The majority of these records come from North Africa and the Middle East, going back three to five thousand years.

Given the time scales involved, wouldn't it be logical, or at least common sense to suppose humans would have arrived at a place of peace with ourselves in this wonderful body that is our common inheritance? But no, such is not the case.

Perhaps we never will achieve inner peace with the body we are given, the product of thousands of generations long gone, but who lived long enough to produce our ancestors. Perhaps it is only in our creation mythologies that man and woman were ever one with each other and their idyllic environment.

For sure, we are all deeply flawed, as were all our ancestors. Yet, there remains in us a desire for what is better, a hope to become our best selves. Realistically, neither we as individuals nor societies will ever achieve perfection as we are a mixture of all the strengths and weaknesses of our ancestors.

That said, from time to time we can do our share to advance the human condition, even if it is only for a moment in the course of human history. In our sphere, naturism speaks to a fundamental human problem. The problem is one of self acceptance, and by extension acceptance of other people.

Naturism addresses, head-on, how people view the human body by teaching that our bodies are not shameful in any part or function. Naturism teaches that we are all valuable and carry the beauty of humanness in each of us regardless of our appearance. It is a corrective to all the wrong headed thinking that produces prudishness. In exposure to one another in social nudity, we learn to treat ourself and others as subject rather than object. In this context, our sexual drive is made subject to our will which is directed toward respect and acceptance of others.

Obviously, naturism does not undo all that is flawed in human nature. That naturists are not perfect and naturism does not lead to human perfection is no argument against it. It is equally obvious that no other human enterprise has succeeded in eliminating all human flaws either. So what?

That those who attempt the naturist path make some progress in eliminating some personal defects is all to the good. A little less prudishness and judgmentalism coupled with a little more body acceptance and respect for self and others regardless of societal standards shows the light to all and makes a positive contribution to the human condition. [Ed.]

Know Your Body

From the beginning of the nudist movement, the emphasis was on having a fit, healthy body. Unfortunately, modern naturism tends to ignore this history and leisure has been the main focus.

This missing piece of naturist history has been discussed in Bare Facts a number of times over the years. However, there isn't much evidence this message has been taken to heart at Lake Edun.

Very few people are observed using our beautiful lake for a vigorous workout type of swim. We have an extensive trail system and few walk them at a pace that would raise the heart rate. Seldom is there a volleyball game, (grass keeps growing in the sand of the court). Now we are gradually installing pieces of exercise equipment beside the trails. Hopefully they will be used for the intended purpose, rather than being regarded as quaint pieces of art.

The lake aside, we all have opportunities where we live to exercise for the sake of our health. The new year can be even better if we take better care of our wonderful bodies through exercise and good nutrition. Add a full body tan and lots of naturally created vitamin D, and you have a beautiful package.

Speaking to this is a stop action video made in Briton that is quite clever in its use of 100 nude people in the project. [Ed.]

It took 100 people, over three days and 2,000 still images stitched together to create this unusual stop-motion video.

The video tells the story of a man named Sam who isn't very happy with his body until he decides to start listening to what his body is trying to tell him.

The supporting cast bends into positions on a large white sheet to form elaborate images of Sam and parts of his body as he begins to pay attention to his health.

As Sam begins to run, dance and swim, the figures morph into shapes depicting the activities.

This is an interesting stop-motion video to make a point which is available <u>here</u>.

I like to run down to the beach and have a little swim in the nude in the morning. *former US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara*

The Courage To Overcome The Nudity Taboo

The word taboo refers to some act or belief that is deemed by society as inherently dangerous and damaging to an individual or society. Further, society enforces strong sanctions against those that break a taboo. Taboos are something not to be messed with as they originally were put in place as a barrier to protect society from immediate or long term harm.

Despite the judgment of tradition upheld by society, we are aware some things deemed taboo in the past are now commonly accepted without comment. In many cases, a taboo is a value judgment made in a specific historical context. On the other hand, some taboos really do seem to have an enduring quality that transcends time, place, and personal opinion.

For example, I doubt the taboo on murder is ever going to fade regardless of how many people commit the act. Hopefully, neither human sacrifice nor legalized slavery ever returns. (Unfortunately, because we were capable of these abominations in the past there is no guarantee it can't happen again). Ultimately, neither time nor society stands still.

Changes occur in society over time which can be for good or ill. Change can be either gradual and evolutionary in nature, or there can be sudden, lurching and unanticipated. Both conditions can occur within an individual and a society.

Changes in technology are the easiest to leap across cultural, racial, and language boundaries with ease. The cell phone, for example, is ubiquitous world-wide. Other things don't seem to translate so readily. Items of culture loaded with meanings that either make no sense to a target culture, or are thought by members of a target culture to be offensive to deeply held values and rejected outright by almost everyone.

This is not to say that rejecting a cultural change is inherently wrong. It's a choice made in a historical context that, over time, might change and become acceptable later. Women's suffrage is an example. Society can change also. Prohibition was given a fair trial, then ultimately rejected by society.

In every case, an advocated change has to overcome barriers to acceptance. There are higher barriers for some than for others. For example, strip clubs have boomed since the 1960's despite outrage from those who uphold traditional morality. Pornography, while always available, but pretty much under the radar until the advent of the internet, is now everywhere. Although both are "taboo," society has made some accommodation for both. Still, neither enjoys a position of "respectability" in society at large.

Naturism/nudism finds itself in a similar position. It faces deep suspicion at every turn, despite over one hundred years of advocacy and successful legal challenges. The skepticism and charges leveled by critics have all been refuted by highly articulate naturists, but without significantly altering society.

The nudity taboo is still quite firmly entrenched in the U.S. and in most of the world when it comes to simple nudity becoming mainstream. While some European countries may be more relaxed about nudity in comparison with the U.S., tickets for public nudity outside defined areas are possible. It is improbably this will change in the foreseeable future. Where does this leave us? First, all the forces arrayed against social nudity are not sufficient reason to despair, so keep the faith! Continued advocacy in a hundred creative ways is crucial to pushing back the boundaries for social nudity. Examples include World Naked Bike Day and World Naked Gardening Day. Second, maintain your own enthusiasm for naturism and its values with other naturists, and by all means have fun! Third, since we can't predict or know what might make social nudity widely accepted overnight, think more locally. This is a one-at-a-time approach to social change. Speak up, invite, and normalize social nudity. Forth, maintain your support for national and local naturism. Believe that our persistence will ultimately pay off. Fifth, don't be satisfied until naturism rises in status to being viewed by society in general as a legitimate life choice for anyone.

For an additional take on acceptance of naturism, this excerpt from the blog, Naturist Philosopher is offered. [Ed.]

Society in the US, as in most other counties, is generally quite hostile to open nudity. It's considered OK for a person to be naked in a few, limited circumstances, and even to enjoy nakedness in fewer cases. But there is a strong taboo against being naked openly and by choice. In various ways this taboo is even stronger now than in recent decades – unless one is some sort of a celebrity or meets quite narrow aesthetic standards of bodily appearance.

As a result, it takes a fair amount of courage for most people to even try social nudity – and to admit they enjoy it. It takes courage to explain to skeptics, let alone people who are actively hostile, what is so good about it. Almost inevitably, one must attempt an explanation to skeptics in order to justify their choice.

Rational arguments in favor of social nudity are often unsuccessful in changing the minds of skeptics and opponents. Such arguments may include:

- Being naked and free of clothing simply feels very good.
- Being naked among others who are also naked engenders feelings of openness and closeness with others.
- When we reject the crutch of wearing clothes to hide our bodies, we are able to like and accept our bodies more.
- When we overcome fears of being naked, we also overcome fears of exposing other aspects of ourselves.
- In order to enjoy social nudity, we have to acquire confidence in having mastery of our sexuality, so this sexuality becomes less of a problem for us.

Many, perhaps most people who haven't experienced social nudity simply do not believe such claims. We understand this, so we don't have much confidence making these claims will sway the attitudes of others towards social nudity....

Nudity specifically is not recognized as a form of free speech or political protest, and therefore not eligible for 1^{st} Amendment protection. This is rationalized on the grounds nudity *per se* is not "expressive" speech – despite quite obvious cases where nudity *does* express attitudes related to the naked

human body in general or one's own naked body. But courts routinely accept the duplicity of their anti-nudity position by willfully refusing to perceive what nudity can express.

Even the most non-sexual depictions of nudity are routinely excluded from Internet sites like Facebook and Google+, (which aren't required to honor the 1st Amendment).

So, there are these and other obstacles to the free enjoyment of social nudity and the means to communicate about its significant merits. Consequently, much courage and perseverance really can be necessary in order for individuals to learn about and choose to follow this path for themselves.

Considering this path? Here's the story.

Becoming More Through Naturism

I search for naturist perspectives to share. Comments by this blogger about the impact naturism has had on him struck a chord. The author, who is a psychologist, describes his journey toward opening up more to others and to life.

I hope you find this excerpt motivating to become more open yourself and to follow this blog. [Ed.]

Becoming more open – this is something I have been risking a lot more lately. I have given all of my family and friends the link to my Naked Poetry book which included nude photography which opens up the can of worms that father/brother/ grandfather/neighbor/friend is periodically to be found without his clothing on. So far, no negative responses. I have to admit that I never expected negative responses from my children as this is not *news* for them. However, I imagine that it will stir up some discomfort in the lives of others which in turn will stir up some discomfort in me.

I am changing as I open up more and more, as I tell the story of who I am through poetry and prose. I am changing as I open up in my relationship with others. I think I am becoming more authentic in the process. Becoming more authentic doesn't mean that I become more handsome or more likable to others. What it does mean is that I can live easier with myself, more gently with myself. And this is new territory for me. And, I think it is unfamiliar territory for almost all of us.

Opening up for me includes naturism and Buddhism as well as Jungian psychology as helpful strategies. I don't pretend for a moment that these are THE strategies for everyone. Each person will need to risk their own journey of opening up based on how they have disguised and hidden themselves. We all hide – hide from others and ourselves – from the uncomfortable and messy reality of who we are beneath our roles, masks, and actions. Sometimes we hide in places of relative isolation or in organizations or in the guise of victims. When we discover how we have hidden ourselves, we discover a pathway out of hiding and must risk following that path. Only then can we truly heal and learn the hardest of all tasks – to like and even love the truth of who we are.

This is the link.

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