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The Newsletter of the *Naturist Action Committee* and the *Naturist Education Foundation*

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The greatest threat to naturism is... Complacency!

Originally published in summer of 2019, this article from NAC and NEF board member Ron Weimer is worth another look as we begin a new year.

Yes, it is you and me and all your naturist friends that do not find a way to support our naturist lifestyle. By doing nothing, we are turning a blind eye to the fact that naturism, our lifestyle and community, is being assaulted from many directions. We all know that we are slowly losing ground in many ways. Clothing-optional beaches that once were tolerated are being closed. Nudist clubs/resorts are disappearing. In California, we have lost Elysium, Swallows, Deer Park, Silver Valley Sun Club and Mystic Oaks. We are losing ground and must stand up and be heard.

Some assaults are direct and some extremely subtle. The most direct assaults come from well-meaning and concerned people and groups that feel they must protect the world from our depraved and unholy life choice. They don't understand that our life style is not sinister. We just enjoy the freedom of feeling the sun and the air on our skin without those icky and scratchy clothes clinging to our sensitive bods. Unfortunately, these people can cause local legislators and park administrators to turn against us. Park administrators can be the most frustrating. For years, we may have a good rapport and they quietly let us have a nude beach as long as things are problem

free. Then a new administrator appears who is driven by his personal morals we cannot tolerate a nude beach in his jurisdiction. Then the assault begins and we lose another place to be one with nature.

Some of the most subtle assaults come from well-meaning legislators that are trying to prevent child porn, sextexting of children, or abuse of children and the handicapped. We must be wary of this possible creep because redefining child pictures as porn could make naturist pictures of families with children pornography. Imagine, a poorly written definition of child pornography could make grandma a pornographer when she takes a picture of her infant grandchild's first bath or the traditional picture on a bear skin rug. Then there is the direct attack by legislatures whose moral compass makes them feel that they must protect the world according to their morality. In these instances, we must unite to campaign against such laws in our jurisdiction. We must let the legislatures know that we won't tolerate these kinds of changes. We can only do this with your help.

Now is the time to "Ask not what *naturism* can do for you... ask what you can do for *naturism*." Well, not exactly as stated by JFK but I think it makes my point. By the way, JFK enjoyed skinny-dipping in the White House pool.

You may now be asking yourself, what can I do? I'm not an activist. I don't have a lot of spare time, and your concerns are quite valid. However, there are many things that you can do to make a

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Please take a survey and help us out!


Visit NaturistEducation.org and look for the survey link, or scan this code:



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difference that would not necessarily take a lot of time. You could help out by writing letters or sending emails to your local legislatures when a bill comes out that might infringe on naturism. Without a show of support from the people, we cannot defend you against these pending bills.

You can talk to your friends about naturism and why it is so enjoyable. Many times when I mention that I am a naturist, the first response that I get is swinger! We need to correct the misconceptions that the uninformed public has about nudists. We need to come out of the closet as our gay friends have. That is the path to recognition and gaining the power to protect naturism.

Even if you need to keep your naturist lifestyle confidential, you can assist those that are working to protect naturism. Your support is what we need to promote and protect naturism for the future. Without it, we will continue to lose ground and find fewer and fewer places to be one with nature. 


International Women's Day at Cypress Cove

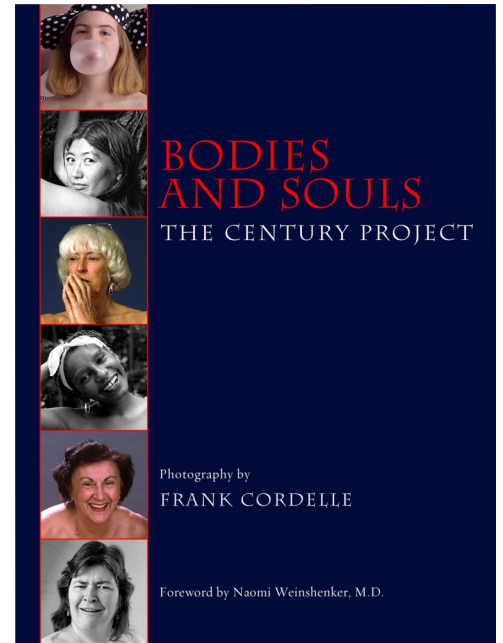
By Susan Shopiro, NAC and NEF Board Member

This year's International Women's Day (IWD) theme is "Choose to Challenge," and it's an amazingly appropriate theme for a challenging year!

We will host the IWD event this year at Cypress Cove on March 6th and 7th. It will be entirely online, and will include several panel discussions on body acceptance, being new to naturism, and women's experiences in naturism.

Announcements will go out on our social media sources soon requesting questions from women to be addressed by panelists.

As part of our women's day celebration, Cypress Cove will be hosting an exhibition of photographs and stories from "Bodies and Souls, The Century Project" by Frank Cordelle. The photographs will be available to be seen in person in a safe space, and online to attendees. 



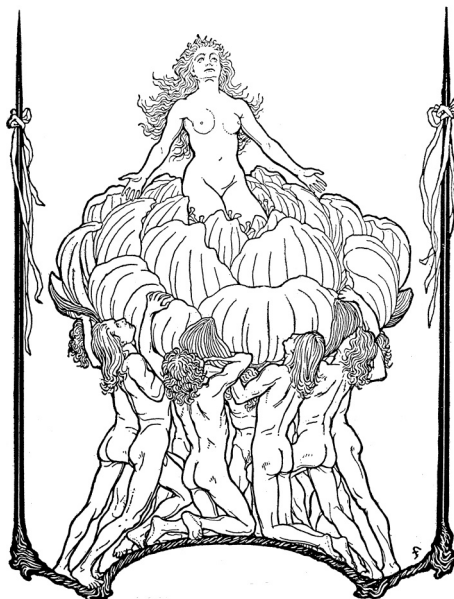
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Social Nudism in Michigan - The Defining Case

Hildabridle vs. State of Michigan

By Bill Schroer, NAC Chair

Many states in the US have laws against “indecent exposure” which in Michigan is defined as “....any open, indecent exposure of his or her person or the person of another.”

Hardly definitive....and, in fact, this vague and non-specific prohibition provided an open door opportunity for any zealous or self-righteous police officer or other authority to harass, arrest or threaten citizens who were sunbathing nude or recreating at a nudist resort. Yes, in the 1950s nudist resorts were not immune from raids by police of the sort made on illegal gambling dens, drug distributors or human traffickers.

The Raid

In 1956 just this sort of zealous Battle Creek City police detective, aware of the existence of Sunshine Gardens Nudist Resort in nearby Bedford Township (about 3 miles from where the author lives), decided to pay a visit to the resort.

This detective who asked a State police officer to accompany him on the pretext of some “business” visited the resort, observed nudists on the premises, and then returned the next day with warrants and arrested three men (Earl Hildabridle and two others) and one woman on a charge of “indecent exposure”. The four nudists were convicted and appealed their conviction. The case wound up in the Michigan Supreme Court.

The court found two issues ... the first was the legality of the search and the second, nudity as indecent exposure.

The Legality of the Search

On this issue the Court was less than amused:

“The fact is the record ... is barren of any testimony these two officers went to the camp on June 15th for any other purpose than as an initial step in a plan to conduct a mass raid on the place.”

And, further ... the Chief Justice was outraged...

“Yet to say this search was illegal is an understatement. What was indecent ... indeed the one big indecency we find in this whole case: descending on these unsuspecting souls like storm troopers; herding them before clicking cameras like plucked chickens, hauling them away in police cars and questioning them for upwards of 5 ½ hours and taking still more pictures; and then, final irony swearing out warrants that one of their own number was the aggrieved victim of an indecent exposure. If this search was legal than any deputized window-peeper with a ladder can spy on any married couple and forthwith photograph and arrest them for exposing themselves to him.”

“ ... the one big indecency we find in this whole case: descending on these unsuspecting souls like storm troopers; herding them before clicking cameras like plucked chickens, hauling them away in police cars ... ”

The court went on to categorize further the violations to the 4th Amendment and other violations of civil rights in this case ... which are entertaining and wonderful in their own right. However, the issue of nudity as “indecent exposure” is the primary purpose of this article and we’ll leave this part of the case with a clear understanding that the search was tainted and inadmissible.

The Violation of the Statute (Prohibition against Indecent Exposure)

As the justices considered the case, the situation portrayed did not impress Justice Voelker:

“...when the police arrived the defendants were sitting or standing in various leisurely attitudes alone or in family and other groups at or near a depressed pool or pond; there was not the slightest evidence by word or gesture of any act or sign of obscenity, lewdness, indecency or immorality. Except for the fact they were

entirely unclothed they might have been any group of people enjoying a rural weekend outing.”

The court went on to consider the history of Sunshine Gardens:

“While this nudist camp had operated for 14 years none of the testifying officers had ever received or heard of a complaint against the place. The closest ... was the testimony of a State trooper whom heard from a few disgruntled motorists he had ticketed and had “twitted” him about the place. So the presumably outraged community boils down to a knot of determined police officers who ... after 14 years finally made up their minds to set a trap and tip over the place. And tip it they did.”

Justice Voelker went on to spend time on the heart of the matter....the issue of whether simple nudism is a violation of the statute prohibiting “indecent exposure”. It is worth the ink here in the author’s view ... and your attention to note a good portion of Justice Voelker’s thoughts ... his argument is clear and compelling. And the author wanted you to see for yourself why this judge ruefully admitted he might be considered the “patron saint” of social nudism:

“Lest I henceforth be heralded as the patron saint of nudism (which I probably will be anyway), I hasten to preface what follows by stating that I am not a disciple of the cult of nudism. Its presumed enchantments totally elude me. The prospect of displaying my unveiled person before others, or beholding others thus displayed, revolts and horrifies me. I think these people have carried an arguably valid basic idea (the deliberate de-emphasis of the prevailing Sestern body taboo, with the anticipated lessening and ultimate disappearance of the undoubted eroticism frequently attendant

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upon such taboo—that is the very opposite of indecency) to excessive lengths.”

“Having said all that I have at once veered to the heart of the case. It is this: Whatever I or my associates (or the circuit judgment of the police or prosecutor, for that matter) may personally think of the practice has nothing to do with the case. More controlling is the fact that there are a number of earnest people in the world (including these defendants) who do subscribe to organized nudism and who think it is morally, mentally and physically healthful. But we need not speculate on or defend or attack the philosophy of nudism. The question before us is much simpler. Were these defendants guilty of making an indecent exposure? I say no.”

“It is said there are hardy bands of sincere and earnest folk among us who likewise insist that all mental, moral and physical health depends on the regular consumption of vast quantities of bran. Others possess a similar passion for goat’s milk. Few molest them or even bother their heads about them unless they try too strenuously to impose or inflict their queer beliefs upon those who happen to loathe these items.”

“Thus, on the facts before us, do I equate the criminality of private social nudism - at least so far as this statute is concerned? Private fanaticism or even bad taste is not yet a ground for police interference. If eccentricity were a crime, then all of us were felons.”

Nudity and Indecent Exposure

Judge Voelker goes on to discuss the whole question of the statute and the logic used to reach a conclusion of guilt. He notes that in a prior “Ring Case”

“... my Brother” (referring to another Justice on the court) has “leapt to the erroneous conclusion that nudity is synonymous with indecency. Both cases proceed on the basic assumption that nudity in itself is obscene or indecent....If this assumption were valid few artists could work from live models....and that stalwart badge of middle-class respectability National Geographic magazine would be banished from the hearth to the censor’s shears.”

Where from here?

Judge Voelker goes on to describe his test for indecency (which the author will discuss in a follow on article). However in the

meantime he is clear on whose responsibility it is to further address the issue of private nudism.

“If private nudism is to be banished in this state as contrary to the public morality we think this attempt must be made by the legislature and not by the police or this Court, and certainly not be stretching out of shape the law of search and seizure and the proper meaning of this statute.”

“Private fanaticism or even bad taste is not yet a ground for police interference. If eccentricity were a crime, then all of us were felons.”

Ring Case

As a final note, prosecutors had leaned on the “Ring Case” (which was a somewhat similar case and for which the court decided in favor of the prosecution) to attempt to convict Hildabridle. Judge Voelker wasn’t having it and effectively said that not only should Hildabridle et al go free ... the Ring decision was a mistake.

“An aroused Judge has instead used this Court as a platform to tell the world what he thinks about such queer newfangled shenanigans as nudism. Now moral indignation is all very well, and many of us might do with more of it, but to indulge in it at the expense of basic constitutional rights and individual liberties can be an expensive and dangerous luxury. Moral indignation is a poor substitute for due process.”

Epilogue

The 1956 Hildabridle decision has had a marked influence on the state of nudist resorts in Michigan with several (unfortunately Sunshine Gardens is not among them) now doing well and most respected as visible legitimate business ventures, including the largest nudist resort in the Midwest, Turtle Lake Resort.

While Judge Voelker may not be a patron saint of nudism he has done one of the finest jobs (in this author’s opinion) of stating the nudist case. He has articulated well (especially for a non-nudist) why nudism in and of itself is not indecent at all. And while he and others may not take to it, it is part of our constitutional guarantee to not be prosecuted simply because what we believe is not popular. Judge Voelker even attempted to help the legislation with a test for indecent exposure. That will be offered at another time....



This image is from Sunshine Gardens Family Nudist Resort. It was posted along with the announcement of it's sale in the winter of 2010, on the "ResortForNudist" blog. It is no longer a nudist campground.

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– The NAC and NEF Board