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

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A Not So Small Detail

By Jonathan Shopiro, NAC Area Rep

There are no Federal laws on nudity so naturists have traditionally focused most of their legal efforts on state laws. These vary considerably from state to state. For example, in Arkansas it is illegal to advocate nudism, while Florida does not criminalize mere nudity unless there is lewd intent (but the disorderly persons law is used instead). You can look up the laws in your state on the NAC website. So when I was on the NAC Board and people would send me questions like, "can I be naked in my back yard?," I would look up the law in their state and give them my opinion.

There is another tier of laws and regulations, however, that can be very impactful for naturists. These are county and other ordinances, and state departmental regulations. Two Florida examples are the St. Lucie county ordinance that established Blind Creek Beach as a clothing-optional beach and the Division of Recreation and Parks' "swimsuit rule" which is used to ban clothing-optional beaches in state parks. This kind of law is supposed to conform to the law of the state but the details can make all the difference for naturist opportunities.

When these local laws and regulations are being written or revised all the usual kinds of arguments come up, but there is one special and especially important input: guidance from the state. So the people writing the local law will look very carefully at the state law and any other relevant state documents.

It turns out that in the 2020 Florida legislative session there were at least three bills relevant to naturists submitted. They all proposed changes to the state's anti-nudity law. The bills' authors had differing goals: one goal was to specify that being nude in a place that was set aside for clothing-optional use was not illegal. This was SB 850. The other goal was to increase the penalty for lewd aggressive exhibitionism. These goals are not contradictory, but it wasn't possible to combine them in one bill.

In Florida, as in other states, bills are assigned to committees for consideration before they are voted on by the entire chamber. Each committee must approve the bill before it goes on to its next committee.

Naturists supported SB 850, and it was unanimously approved in each of its two committees, but it never made it to the Florida Senate floor because of the onset of Covid-19. This was not as much of a disaster as you might think because the bill didn't make a substantive change to Florida law, but just restated in more explicit terms what was already there. However, in the process of considering SB 850, something quite consequential happened.

As part of the process of considering bills in their committees in Florida, the committee staff prepares analysis reports discussing the fiscal and other impacts of the proposed legislation. These non-partisan papers contain information that is agreed to by all sides. The staff of the Committee on Commerce and Tourism produced such a report on SB 850.

"This report contains just about everything naturists could have wished for."

This report contains just about everything naturists could have wished for. It quotes the

AANR estimate that nude tourism has a \$7.4 billion economic impact in Florida. It states that Florida courts have ruled that mere nudity without lewd intent is not illegal, and it names the existing clothing-optional beaches in Florida.

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While this report may at first glance seem to be an incidental document produced during consideration of a bill that never passed, it is likely to have an outsized impact on future opportunities for naturists. Whenever a regulation or ordinance affecting naturists is being considered in the State of Florida, this report will be there to attest with the authority of the state that naturist beaches and other facilities can be beneficial to the local economy and community. Also, this report will serve as the basis for analysis reports on future state legislation, including bills that are being considered in the Florida Senate and House right now.



Read the bill analysis online at:

[https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?FileName=2020s00850.cm.DOCX&DocumentType=Analysis&BillNumber=0850&Session=2020)

[File Name=2020s00850.cm.DOCX&DocumentType=Analysis&BillNumber=0850&Session=2020](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?FileName=2020s00850.cm.DOCX&DocumentType=Analysis&BillNumber=0850&Session=2020)

The Florida Senate			
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT			
(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)			
Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Commerce and Tourism			
BILL:	SB 850		
INTRODUCER:	Senator Pizzo		
SUBJECT:	Exposure of Sexual Organs		
DATE:	February 3, 2020	REVISED:	
ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Stokes	Jones	CJ	Favorable
2. McMillan	McKay	CM	Favorable
3.		RC	
<p>I. Summary:</p> <p>SB 850 amends s. 800.03, F.S., to specifically permit being naked in public while on clothing-optional beaches.</p>			

Nude Swims with MARNA

An Interview with Walter Green

By Bill Schroer, NAC Chair

Interview from February 1, 2021

Renting a public swimming pool for a nude swim event is a method for allowing nudist group members to swim during the off season or, if the group doesn't have its own pool, the opportunity to swim nude anytime of the year. If the event is open to the public, it is also a demonstrated way of successfully introducing non-nudists to the benefits of social nudism. While it is sometimes difficult to rent or lease a pool on an ongoing basis, the effort has paid off for a number of nudist organizations and supporters of naturism. Both landed and non-landed nudist organizations around the country, as well as some proactive nudist organizers, sponsor these events.

One such organizer and club is Walter M Green III, President and Founder of MARNA (Maryland Area Nudist Association). Under Walter's leadership MARNA has recently re-

started their public nude swims after having lost their swim venue several years ago. I recently spent some time talking with Walter about MARNA, the re-starting of their public nude swims and the impact on membership and introducing people to naturism.

Walter initiated the MARNA group as an online forum back in the mid-90s. "I wanted to start this club because there was no place for single naturists like me to go. Most nudist resorts didn't want me as a member....because I was single." He began his forum for single naturists, and as membership grew...the club evolved into a club where members would meet. Walter formalized the organization as an AANR (American Association for Nude Recreation) non-landed club (meaning there was no physical place owned by the group to meet or recreate). The group looked for opportunities to meet and socialize as

well as enjoy some activity. A nude swim event at a public pool became an idea supported by the group members.

In the early 2000s MARNA found a public pool willing to host the nude swim events. And, while MARNA was created by and for singles, couples and families were and are welcome to attend the nude swims and other activities. As Walter emphasized "Everything we do is a family event." (Those under 18 who wished to attend had to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.)

MARNA swims attracted 30-40 people on a monthly basis and continued until about 2010 when the facility was sold and the new owners did not make the pool available to MARNA.

A new facility which included a

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pool and fitness facility was discovered in ElkrIDGE, Maryland...not as convenient but still within the Baltimore metro area. After holding the swim events successfully for several years, difficulties evolved including having to rent the pool from one group and the fitness facility from another group. From there the pool was closed and MARNA shifted to conducting nude yoga sessions in the fitness facility. This continued until some users of the facility became unhappy the facility wasn't available on the days MARNA reserved the space....and also that the facility was being rented to nudists. While the owner was very comfortable with MARNA and their events, pressure from other users of the facility resulted in MARNA losing access to the facility.

After several years of searching, Walter and his group found a new facility in November of 2020 in nearby Jessup, Maryland. Walter wants to hold events twice monthly but the Covid-19 issue has impacted his plans to hold events as frequently as some members might like. Still, the fact the swims are occurring at all in a Covid-19 environment is a testament to Walter and his team's determination: "We ask people to social distance and wear masks when not in the pool, but it isn't practical to require masks in the pool....". The swim events are still drawing about 15-20 individuals per event, reflecting some loss of participation due to Covid.

While capacity is higher than the 15-20 guests currently attending, the State has restricted the capacity for any more due to the Covid-19 issue. Walter hopes once the Covid-19 problem is past he can expand the number of people able to attend.

Guests include members of MARNA and also includes non-member singles or couples and/or members of the community including families with children. The MARNA swim events do not have any restrictions on race, age, ethnicity or sexual orientation. And, Walter is resistant to restrict attendance on the basis of gender: "I don't want to put a restriction on single males...and so far we've had a pretty good overall mix, so I haven't had the need to do so." Walter noted this particular pool offered some unique benefits: "While some nude swim events have challenges relating to obtaining non-nudist lifeguards willing to work a nude event, that is not an issue at this facility as the pool is 3-4 feet deep throughout making it a very safe environment for swimmers of all abilities."

MARNA events are held now on Sundays....although the swims have been held on a Saturday, and Walter would like to mix up the dates. "Some members/guests can't attend on Sunday". The swim events normally run for about 3 hours usually starting at 5 PM. Walter and George (VP of MARNA) along with a couple of volunteers, staff the events to make sure all the safety and behavior standards are followed. "We have occasionally had people who came to our swims for the wrong reason or who made comments to women that were inappropriate, and we had to ask them to leave. While we welcome everyone, anyone that doesn't behave responsibly will be asked to leave."

In addition to the swimming pool, this new facility has additional rooms available, and Walter initiated nude yoga classes (for a separate fee) as part of the mix of activities available.

Additional activities sponsored in the past by MARNA also include bowling. Walter notes the bowling events are not as popular as swimming, but he hopes to restart the bowling events as well. "The swimming events are the driver...as participation picks up in the pool we'll develop more interest in getting another bowling event going."

Walter works to promote the events both inside and outside of MARNA. "We promote the swim events through the MARNA website, Facebook, Meetup and of course through member word of mouth." While Walter would like to continue the swim events throughout the year he admits it is difficult to get people to come to an indoor facility to swim in the summer. The organization is looking for an outdoor pool to shift the swims outside during the summer but hasn't found an acceptable facility to date.

Walter and George's initiative and determination to create a singles nudist venue has resulted in some very positive outcomes:

- The existence of a non-landed AANR club in the Baltimore, MD metro area
- The creation and continued availability of monthly nude swim events open to MARNA members and the public
- The development of different nudist activities beyond swimming (i.e. yoga and bowling) which allow for a greater variety of nude friendly activities for both MARNA members and non-nudists interested in exploring nude recreation

"Anyone looking for the opportunity to participate in nude recreation may want to do what Walter did...start your own, build it and they will come. MARNA is a model that may be replicated across the country....and I hope will be!"

Lessons Learned


Reviewing my interview with Walter, I'm struck by what one person can accomplish (along with George and other MARNA members) in the form of creating opportunities for nudists and for non-nudists to experience first hand the nudist approach to recreational activities. Walter's success is especially noteworthy as MARNA has no clubhouse or facility but manages to grow members, have fun events at different venues and build a sense of "community" all while operating "in a cloud". Additional takeaways from this interview include:

- There is interest in social nudism among the general public. Given an opportunity to explore the nudist experience many non-nudists may be persuaded to try it out.
- While renting a public pool for a nudist event may be (or more likely "will be" a challenge) Walter's persistence paid off, and he has continued to find venues for his swims to be held.
- Interest goes beyond swimming. Nude yoga, bowling, card parties, billiard sessions and more may all be successfully incorporated into a holistic offering of nudist recreational activities offered by a club or organizer. The demand is there.

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Overall, Walter Green's vision of a nudist club that admits everyone and offers a "family friendly" nudist experience through a range of nudist recreational activities is a both a success and a work in progress. Walter has plans for the future to expand and develop even more opportunities for nude recreation through his club. Anyone looking for the opportunity to participate in nude recreation may want to do what Walter did...start your own, build it and they will come. MARNA is a model that may be replicated across the country....and I hope will be!

For more information about MARNA contact Walter Green at walter.g@mama.us or call MARNA at (443) 686-8151 and leave a message. You can contact Bill Schroer at Bill.Schroer@NaturistAction.org 

Is Nudity Programmed In?

By Richard Mason, NAC Board Member and SFFB President

In 1988, I became a board member of SFFB, Inc. (South Florida Free Beaches, Inc.) We were affiliated with the ASA (American Sunbathing Association, which became the American Association for Nude Recreation) and my name was given to ASA/Arnie Ericson as the ASA contact.

This led to my receiving calls daily from people who were out of state, as well as people living in Florida, with general questions like: Where are the nude beaches in Florida?

I found out that when people contacted the ASA asking about Florida, they were given my phone number. The number of calls were small in the beginning, averaging 2 to 5 a day. Starting in 1990, I became self-employed with a home office and answering machine.

After we established Haulover Beach in 1991, the calls increased, and one day I had counted 18 phone calls.

These calls followed a pattern. Almost all were from a male. Most were from married men. The calls all started out asking where there is a nude beach in Florida.

Being a marketing guy, I started asking them questions.

I learned that most had never been to a nude beach or resort. A few had skinny-dipped as a child, as a boy scout, or in the military.

The main question I asked was: How long have you had this desire to want to swim nude at a nude beach?

Almost all said they had this urge/desire since they were children. Most stated it involved going to a tropical beach and swimming nude. It was something that drifted in and out of their mind all their life.



That was also my dream as a child. Particularly after I saw a movie about the South Seas with Maria Montez in the 1930s or early 1940s. When I dreamed about being on a tropical beach with a brown-skinned woman (Maria Montez) I wore a swimsuit. But, when I was alone, I was nude. But like most dreams, they get deferred and are put into the back of the mind.

After a few years of these calls, I came to an understanding where I believe that there is something in our homo-sapien structure, whether we come from "Lucy" or Neanderthal, that accepts the normality of being nude.

Many said they would feel safer on a beach than in a landed resort. Many stated that their wife had them make the call. A few feared that if they went behind a gated location, they could not leave if they were offended.

About 8 years ago, I read in the local newspaper where a university professor was starting a study on this very subject. I clipped the article out and planned to contact him. Unfortunately, that article is in the pile of planned projects that

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one as an activist never gets back too.

[Editor's note: If you are aware of this study or the article, we would appreciate this information. Sadly, details were sparse and we weren't able to find it.]

The point here is that I believe a study will indicate that what we as nudists do is really just in the natural order of things. Those who have not experienced social nudity may have suppressed the natural order of the human species. That suppression is a learned, man-made, unnatural response to the many inhibitions that have been placed upon the general population.


Why is this important to know?

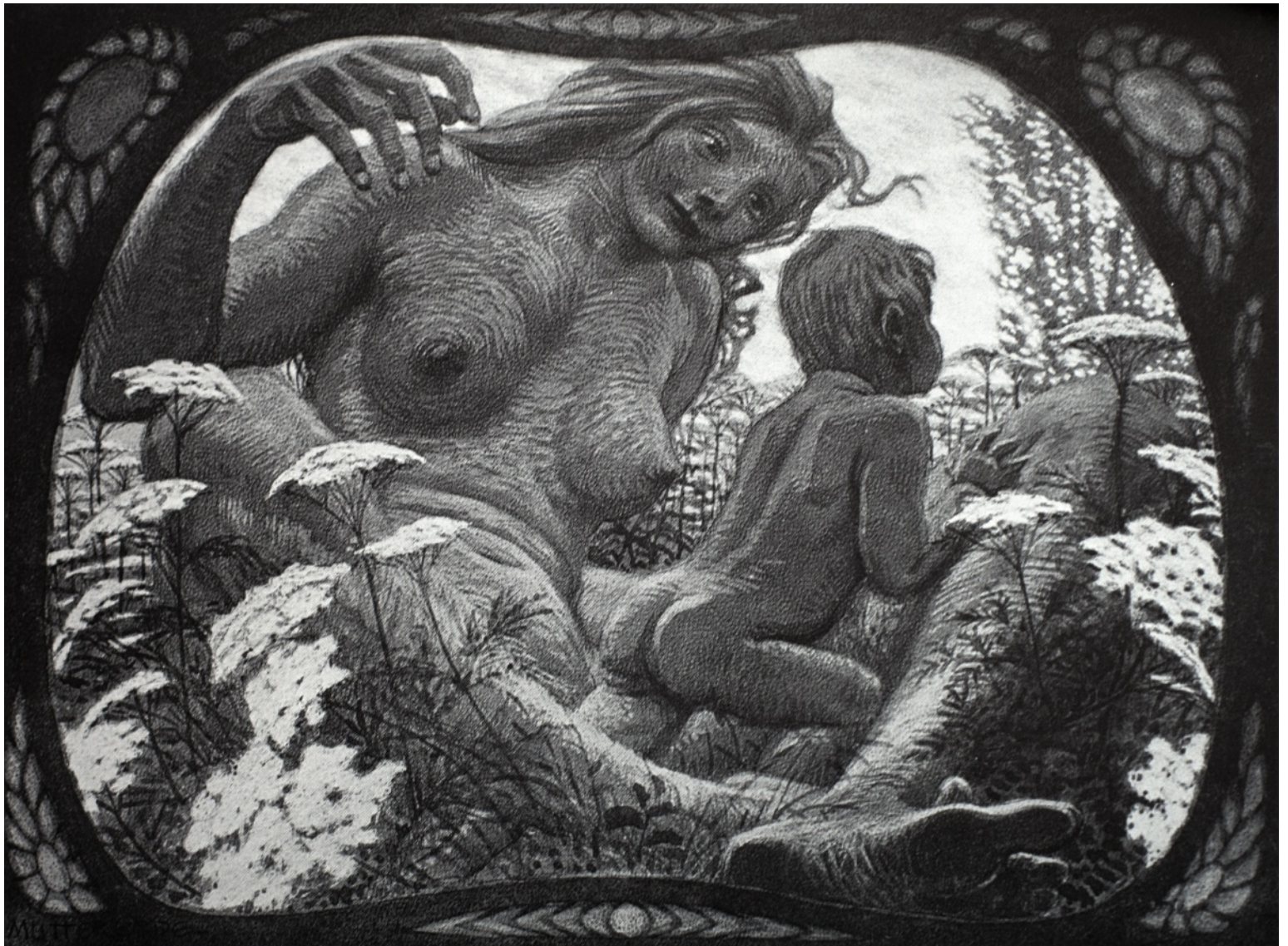
Because those in the Nudist/Naturist market segment, who want to grow the market segment, need only to communicate to the general population the whereabouts of nudist opportunities.

Assuming this thesis, or accepting the mini-study I did when I was getting those phone calls, and later what Shirley and I did from 1989-91 when we held public meetings on the issue of nude beaches, the growth market in nude recreation is out there in the general population.

Proof: Haulover Beach. There never was an advertisement run to promote this beach.

When we open additional public beaches in Florida (or perhaps elsewhere) those beaches will fill up. For example, Blind Creek Beach. One media release to the travel sections of major market newspapers could easily have BCB loaded with 3000 to 5000 people per weekend within a year.

America is loaded with prospective nudists who are waiting for the backs of their minds to be triggered. All we need to do is communicate where the opportunities are at. 



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