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

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Mayor Responds to Haulover Crowds

South Florida Free Beaches, Inc., Haulover Beach's co-op beach community association, appealed to the Mayor of Miami-Dade County for a review of Beach Safety, Lifeguard and Police/Ranger placement on Haulover Beach for the Memorial Day Weekend.

This was due to the expectant post-pandemic crowds as well as the longer daylight hours. The mayor responded by providing the needed personnel to support the beach visitor crowd which were in the thousands each day.

Haulover Beach on Miami Beach's Gold Coast is considered the American Riviera and has claimed status as the No. 1 nude beach in the World. South Florida Free Beaches, Inc. is affiliated with the Naturist Action Committee in a mutual support relationship.

[Editor's note: Richard's 'thank you' letter to the Mayor states much positive feedback from the weekend and expresses appreciation for the professionalism of those working to keep everyone safe.]



Haulover Due for Beach Renourishment

South Florida Free Beaches, Inc petitions Miami-Dade County's Executive Mayor for Beach Renourishment funding and to be included in the plans by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

With the shortage of dollars and sand to restore all the beaches in North Miami-Dade County, Florida, the fight goes on by each interest for the sand.

The billionaire owners of the condos want government supported and paid for sand pumped on their private beaches behind their condos even if that priority leaves out the public beaches of Haulover Beach Park.

The members of the South Florida Free Beaches plan to contest any decision that leaves Haulover's Naturist Beach out of the Beach Renourishment program.

[Editor's note: Richard reported that he's witnessed two other Beach Renourishment cycles that had skipped Haulover, and that Haulover's shoreline has receded over 100 feet due to erosion in the last 30 years.]



Updates are from Richard Mason, South Florida Free Beaches President and Naturist Action Committee Board Member.



Elmschrat, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons. Skinny Dipping at Haulover.

Lee Baxandall: The New York Times Letters, Essays, and Interviews, 1971-1976

By Shannon Lewis

Lee Baxandall made several appearances in the *New York Times* throughout the 1970s, offering a glimpse into a period of his life where he was evolving from a New Left intellectual into a champion of the free beaches. Some are primarily commentaries on the Vietnam War, but several others shed light on his unique ideology and his activities in the earliest days of nude beach activism in the U.S.

Baxandall's first appearance in the pages of the *New York Times* seems to have been in a May 15, 1971 article he penned called "Down in the East Village." In it, Baxandall describes a growing disillusionment with the Village as a cultural hub for the city's writers, artists and freethinkers, as the revolutionary optimism of the 1960s was giving way to the starker political and economic realities of the 1970s. Baxandall writes, "East Village. Doesn't it sound like we're some community? We're not. As the sixties advanced, the promise of one was here." Baxandall goes on to say that the "clannish ways of what was for so long the liberty-seeking immigrants' lower East Side attracted us. Compacting ourselves seemed to assure survival. We hoped we were numerous enough to gain the advantages of a clustered community."

But the quality of life in the East Village was rapidly deteriorating. Crime and drug abuse were rampant. After being robbed at knifepoint in the hallway of his apartment building (one of several such incidents), Baxandall began to question the sustainability of insular environments. It's an idea seen in many of Baxandall's writings, a criticism of activists and others confining themselves to ghettos, or "naked ghettos" as he sometimes described the private nudist camps during his naturist activist years.

In his description of the encounter with the robber, he refuses to distinguish himself too much from his assailant. Indeed, he recognizes they share a similar predicament in the city. "The addict thief and I talked," he writes. "We both said we were scared. What else is new? Rulers have always sought the means to divide and preoccupy those who must endure them."

He concludes the article with an observation about the 60s radicals that might well be applied to the naturist movement he would lead a few years later. "We have learned much, including that compaction does little as such to yield solutions to the human pain." A "new-style community" must emerge, he argues, which he vividly describes as "the technology-sustained villages of affinity in organization and friendship" with "binding values that carry and leap hither and yon in space and time. In the seventies we are spreading nationwide."

A November 12, 1972 *New York Times* article called "A Painting Long Believed Lost Is Found By Persistent Art Historian" describes Baxandall's little-known role in discovering and restoring an important painting by German artist Robert Koehler called "The Strike." First shown at the National Academy of Design in 1886, then at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, the painting was believed lost in 1917, following several years on display in a Minneapolis public library. "When I was in Harvard Square in Cambridge, I saw

an engraving of 'The Strike' in an underground paper called *New Foundation*," Baxandall tells the *Times* reporter. "I knew nothing about the painting or the artist at the time, but my curiosity was aroused." Determined to locate the lost symbol of class struggle, Baxandall searched for Koehler's painting in Milwaukee, before unearthing the badly-damaged work in a Minneapolis cellar. He purchased it from the library's art dealer for \$750. He paid for its restoration and loaned it to the Hospital Worker's Union headquarters in New York, before later selling it in a collection of paintings to a Detroit businessman. After the sale, he coordinated its return to Germany, and it is now housed in the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, which bought it in 1990 for \$450,000.



The Strike

But Baxandall got the most *Times* coverage for his resistance of efforts to ban nude bathing on the Cape Cod National Seashore. Opposition to the skinny-dippers was fierce. The man responsible for the aerial photography used to prepare for the Normandy invasion flew aerial surveys of the nude beach and presented them to the Park Service as evidence of the naturist menace. It's notable that the ban was reportedly driven by wealthy residents of the Truro Neighborhood Association, upset not only by the nude bathers, but by the out-of-town cars parked along their streets. Baxandall was irked not just by the opposition to his summer pastime, but by the government overreach and the apparent classism that drove the crackdowns on nude sunbathers. It's a topic he addressed in great detail in the August 1976 *Green Mountain Quarterly*, which drew parallels between the Cape Cod situation and the "sand curtain" of the Connecticut beaches, which effectively restricted their use to the wealthy and predominantly white cottage owners.

His first letter to the editor of the *New York Times* regarding nude beaches was published on March 30, 1975. In it, he commends the paper for a March 16 feature, "The All-Over Tan: A Modest Pursuit," describing the article on Caribbean nude sunning as "splendid," but "a little elitist." Baxandall points out that, "Most of us don't have the occasion... to seek some semi-deserted Caribbean island for our skinny-dipping. We need, and want, beaches within the United States, located at a reasonable distance from our homes, to which we may drive for a skinny-dip."

In an April 20, 1975 letter, he specifically addresses the Cape Cod restrictions. "I would like to point out that for the first time in its history, the National Park Service is seeking to start an anti-nude bathing policy at the Cape Cod National Seashore. It's acting on supposed environmental rather than moral grounds, but it's a dangerous precedent and could spread throughout the National Park Service." He doesn't shy away from identifying the source of the complaints. "A regressive local clique in Cape Cod has caused the shamefaced proposed ban there. It must be headed off."

Baxandall's rapidly-evolving free beach activism is clearly seen in the closing sentences of his letter, where he asserts that skinny-dippers "have the right to have their recreational needs met as much as other minorities – say snowmobilers or hikers – have their needs served." It's time for designated nude beaches in America, Baxandall declares. "Let's stop sneaking off to Bermuda to take a skinny-dip, and insist on our need for facilities in Massachusetts, New York, Louisiana and California."

Following a July, 1975 federal order prohibiting nudity on Cape Cod National Seashore, an August 18, 1975 New York Times article describes Lee Baxandall's efforts to reclaim Truro beach. It notes posters depicting a mace-carrying bear dressed in a ranger's uniform with a hat reading "Smutty" inviting people to what Baxandall was careful to describe as a "party," not a demonstration, as a demonstration required a permit and adherence to various regulations, including attire. "If the rangers come, we hope they will not be provocative. We'll do our thing and they can do their thing." Baxandall's August party attracted nearly 5,000 attendees, with no citations nor arrests.

A year later, the August 9, 1976 *New York Times* includes a brief news item about Baxandall's planned August 7 Meadow Beach demonstration at the Cape Cod National Seashore, which was to coincide with a west coast event, organized by Eugene Callen's Beachfront USA. Rain forced Baxandall's event to be postponed until the following weekend. The article identifies him as the spokesman for the Free the Free Beach Committee, and he is quoted as saying, "We believe in nudity, but we also believe in sanity. It would be crazy for us to go out there today." These events are recognized as the first organized National Nude Beach Weekend, which later became National Nude Weekend and then Nude Recreation Week.

Lee Baxandall's letters, essays and interviews in the *New York Times* represent a snapshot of a sociopolitical philosophy that remained remarkably consistent from his college days, and throughout his substantial body of New Left writings, his beach activism years, and his editorials in *Free Beaches*, *Green Mountain Quarterly*, *Clothed With The Sun* and *Nude & Natural*. In his words and writings, there are recurring commentaries on classism and accessibility, the unsustainability of ghettoized political and cultural movements, and strategies necessary for building effective coalitions.

"Let's stop sneaking off to Bermuda to take a skinny-dip, and insist on our need for facilities in Massachusetts, New York, Louisiana and California."

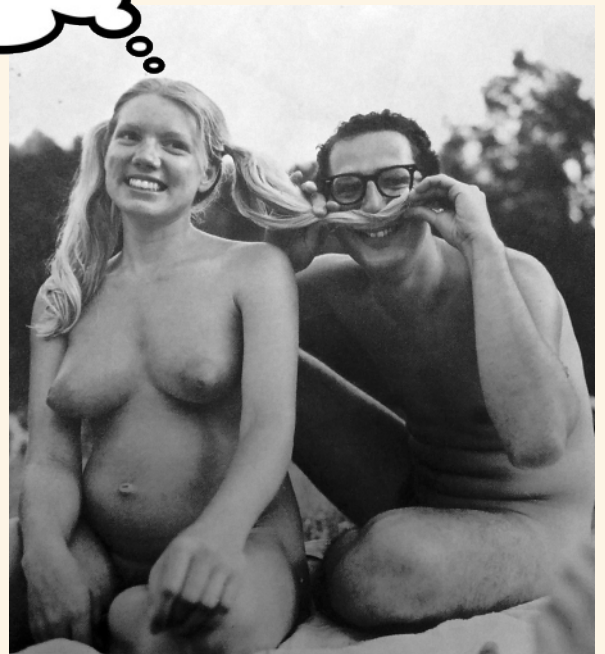
- Lee Baxandall

His repeated descriptions of skinny-dipping as a commonplace activity deserving of the same accommodations granted to hikers and other outdoor recreationalists alludes to an idea he expresses in earlier writings, in which he defines "radical" as something "pertaining to the root," a fundamental need or desire, rather than an extreme or fringe idea. His unapologetic assertion in 1975 that "We need, and want, beaches within the United States, located at a reasonable distance from our homes, to which we may drive for a skinny-dip" was a straightforward goal, a push for a modest but vital freedom that would define his work for the next thirty years.



Last Month's "Caption This!" Winner

Hmmm...
Maybe I like a man
with a moustache!



The Day Groucho Marx Decided to Grow a Moustache.

- Submitted by Mike S.

Honorable Mention: "A never released photo (until now) for rehearsals of Tom Cushing's play, 'Hairly Proper'."

- Submitted by John C. Wells.

NAC and NEF Seeking Stock Photos

If you have some recent photos of the beaches or venues that you visit, and are willing to share them, the Naturist Action Committee and Naturist Education Foundation would sure appreciate it!

Perhaps you noticed that the Page 1 photo of Haulover is from the Wikimedia Commons (Wikipedia), and is about a decade old. I pulled that photo because I lack any recent photos of Haulover Beach at my fingertips.

Historical photos are easy. There's a ton of them at the NEF Research Library. However, since we don't have direct permission from the publishers, we're considering it "fair use" to use them occasionally. This includes things like the "Caption This" column. An important part of "fair use" is the age and whether the photos are still being sold commercially. Older photos have a better case for "fair use". Recent photos don't.



This Public Domain photo is the first one shown on the Wikipedia "stock photography" page. It has nothing to do with this article, but it probably helped draw your attention.

Therein lies the challenge. The modern world of social media, newsletters, and websites demand photos to accompany everything possible. If it's not "newsworthy" (which is another "fair use" consideration), then it needs to be a stock photo, original content, or permission otherwise granted to use it.

Since readers of this newsletter probably (collectively) visit every nude beach in the country, we're graciously requesting your photos and permission to use them on our social media, newsletter, and websites. If you'd like us to give credit to you when we use your photo, let us know.

Please send photos to:
Doug.Hickok@NaturistEducation.org
Ideally, please limit it to your best 5 (max) for each beach or venue. If a person in the photo is easily identifiable, please include that they have granted permission as well. 🙏

Caption This!

This ongoing series highlights a time when cameras were allowed and cheesy photographs were encouraged. (See the May 2021 newsletter for more details.) All photos are from items held at the NEF Research Library.

About this Photograph

Although I've seen photos from this series in several magazines, this specific one comes from a book: "Body/Self Appreciation."

Now it's your turn to Caption This! ➡

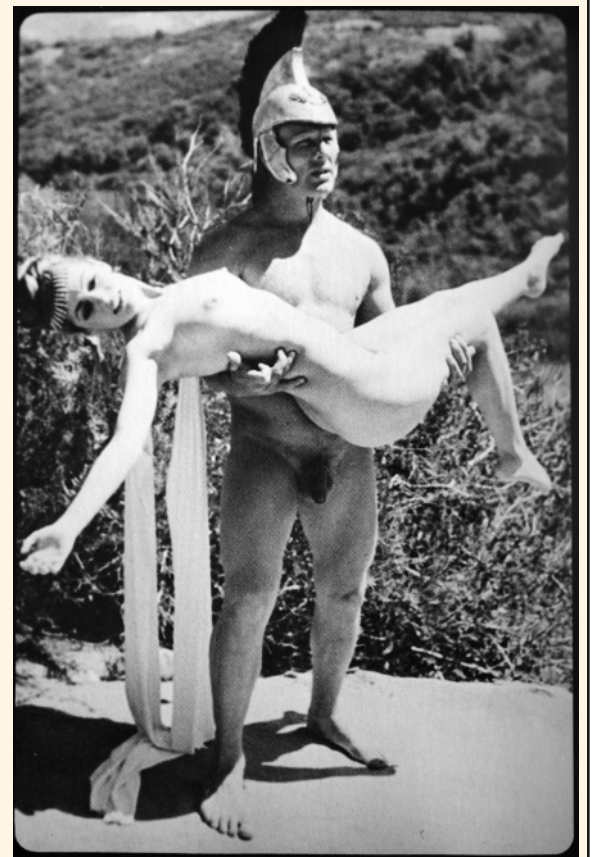
Send your caption ideas to:

Doug.Hickok@NaturistEducation.org

Please include:

- ▶ Your name that we can print if yours is selected. (Full name, or first name, or nickname, or anonymous...whatever you prefer)
- ▶ The type of caption (Title above, Caption below, Speech Bubbles, or a mix of all these).
- ▶ The caption wording, or who said/thought what.

Winners get fame in the next newsletter!



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NAC relies entirely on donations from generous naturists like you, now more than ever.

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– The NAC and NEF Board