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

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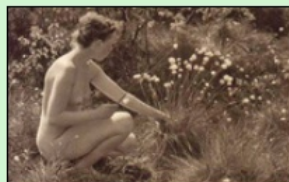
Get ready for the Annual **World Naked Gardening Day (WNGD)**! People across the globe are encouraged, on the **first Saturday of May**, to tend their portion of the world's garden unclothed as nature intended.

Gardening has a timeless quality, and anyone can do it: young and old, singles or groups, the fit and infirm, urban and rural. An elderly lady in a Manhattan apartment can plant new annuals in her window box. Families can rake leaves in their back yard. Freehikers can pull invasive weeds along their favorite stretch of trail. More daring groups can make rapid clothes-free sorties into public parks to do community-friendly stealth cleanups.

Why garden naked? First of all, it's fun! Second only to swimming, gardening is at the top of the list of family-friendly activities people are most ready to consider doing nude. Moreover, our culture needs to move toward a healthy sense of both body acceptance and our relation to the natural environment. Gardening naked is not only a simple joy, it reminds us--even if only for those few sun-kissed minutes--that we can be honest with who we are as humans and as part of this planet.

"The body seems to feel beauty when exposed to it as it feels the campfire or sunshine, entering not by the eyes alone, but equally through all one's flesh like radiant heat, making a passionate ecstatic pleasure glow not explainable."

- John Muir, founder of The Sierra Club



Dancing in the fields epitomizes the spirit of communion and back-to-basics living.

So what should you do? First of all, on the first Saturday of May, find an opportunity to get naked and do some gardening. Do so alone, with friends, with family, with your gardening club, or with any other group collected for that purpose. Do it inside your house, in your back yard, on a hiking trail, at a city park, or on the streets. Stay private or go public. Make it a quiet time or make it a public splash. Just get naked and make your part of the botanical world a healthier and more attractive place.

Secondly, *tell* someone about your experience. No one owns this event, so it does not really matter whom you tell, but tell *someone*. Tell your friends about your day of naked gardening; write down what you thought of it and email it to your local newspaper; post your thoughts and images onto an Internet site; submit stories and photos to your club newsletter.

Mark your calendars!

**Saturday
May 7, 2022**

ALWAYS THE FIRST SATURDAY IN MAY.

"When you're out there with a gentle breeze on you, every last hair on your body feels it. You feel completely connected with the natural world in a way you just can't in clothes."

- Barbara Pollard of [Abbey House Gardens](#)
(Source: [The Age](#))

WNGD.info

Film Review: The Squaw Mountain Ranch Films

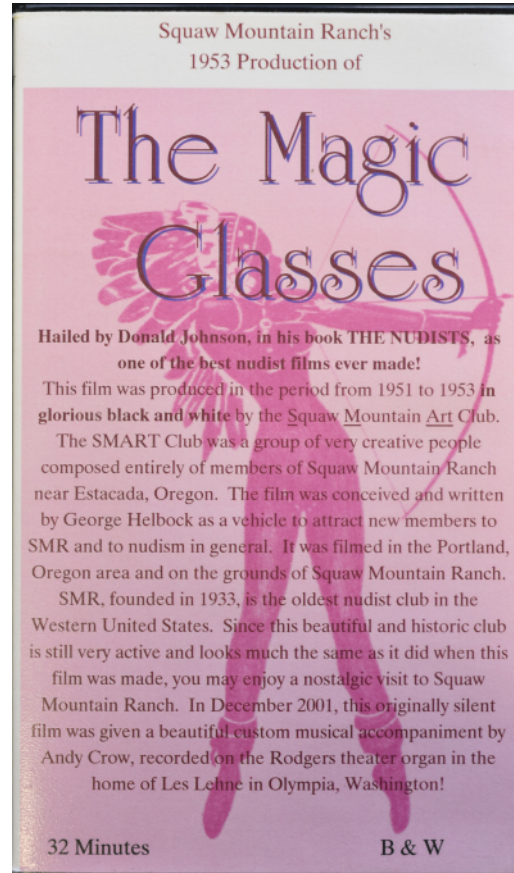
By Reb Belstner

This month we're reviewing not one but two films, both produced in the Fifties in Oregon by Squaw Mountain Ranch's Squaw Mountain Art Club – better known as the SMART Club.

According to Mark Storey's *Cinema au Naturel* (available through the NEF and well worth a read), the SMART Club was a collective of amateur artists and photographers wishing to explore naturism in various forms of media. This resulted in, among other things, two films made "for fun" and not for commercial release: *The Magic Glasses* and *Gone With the Sun*. Both films feature full frontal nudity of both sexes, which would have led to an "obscene" label in a marketed film, at the time.

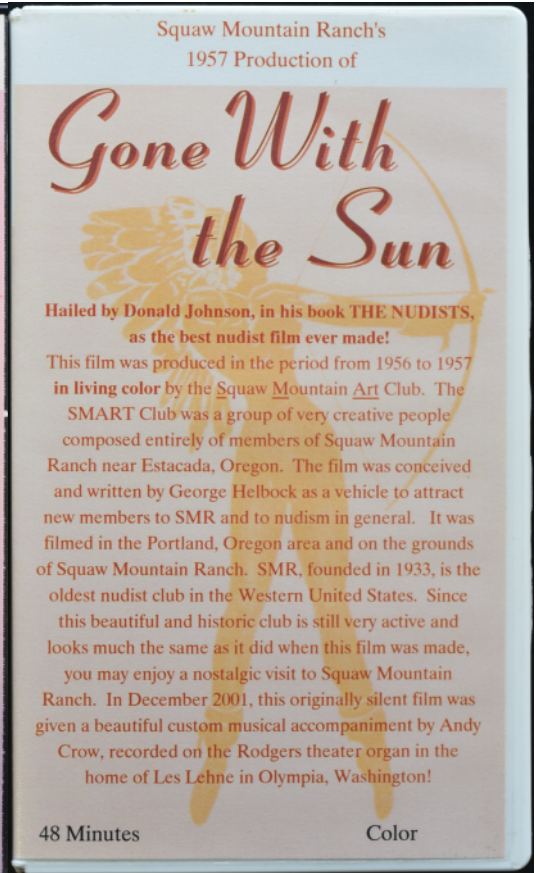
These films were made by nudists, for nudists, and what's more, they seem to provide some anthropological insight into the naturist subculture, as well.

Take *The Magic Glasses* (Director Hugh Baldrá). I'm reminded of Edward S. Curtis' 1914 film *In the Land of the War Canoes*. Filmed in British Columbia with Kwakiutl actors, *War Canoes* tells the story of Motana, a chief's son, who goes on a spiritual quest while ever pining for the beautiful Naida, another chief's daughter who is coveted by an evil sorcerer. And while the film was marketed as a melodrama,



the story line feels more like an excuse for what takes up the bulk of the movie: re-enactments of several Kwakiutl rituals and dances, all of which were incorporated into the plot fairly smoothly.

Similarly, *The Magic Glasses* uses



its plot as a pretense to show naturists in their natural habitat: in this case, Squaw Mountain Resort. Released in 1952, this silent black-&-white film runs only half an hour long and starts out seeming like one of those nudist "documentaries" that

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Trying on the Magic Glasses.



The glasses make fabric invisible, including the fine needlework being shown off here.

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dominated the past. The opening title cards do not help: “There are many ways to become acquainted with NUDISM.” it begins...

The film centers on “Bill & Mary”, an ordinary couple living ordinary lives. One morning, while on his way to work, Bill finds a pair of glasses on the sidewalk. No one claims ownership of the glasses so he holds on to them.

Later, he gets home and relaxes with a newspaper while his wife sits and works needlepoint. He can’t quite make out the newsprint so he tries out the newfound glasses. The glasses do not help with his newfound astigmatism, but when he looks up he’s startled to discover that Mary is naked! He has her try the glasses and they both marvel at how the spectacles allow people to see through clothing.

Enter visitors John and his wife (whose name is never mentioned), who seem to be expected but the reason for their visit is never mentioned. As they socialize in the living room, Bill sneaks off to put on the magic glasses – ha ha! What a card, being a voyeur and all!

Mary soon catches Bill in his shenanigans and they reveal their mysterious find to John and his Mrs. After the glasses make the rounds the two couples decide to try nudism for real, stripping down to play cards.

Oh no! During the course of the evening, the glasses are accidentally destroyed! But that’s okay, because the John and his wife reveal they are nudist, so somehow that makes everything okay!

They agree to go to a nudist camp with the visiting couple and see what NUDISM (as the film calls it) is all about.

I can’t help but feel the film, up to this point, is all pretense to get to scenes of naturists doing naturist things at the resort, much like the story of Motana’s quest in *War Canoes* feels like an excuse to show many dances and other spectacles of the Kwakiutl people. And despite being staged, like the ethnographic elements in *War Canoes*, the nudist resort scenes in *Glasses* feel fresh, not forced, as they would if they were in a film by, say, Doris Wishman. And what’s more, it’s worth noting that, along with full frontal nudity, we get to see regular members of the place possessing natural, realistic bodies. Once the couples are at Squaw Mountain, they go through the typical rounds of images from a film showing people exploring a nudist resort for the first time:

- ▶ Meeting the regulars
- ▶ Touring the grounds
- ▶ Frolicking in the pool
- ▶ Use of swing sets, tennis courts, & (of course!) volleyball
- ▶ Outdoor showers (which are a lovely thing, in my experience)
- ▶ Swimming in the lake

Because these scenes are not purposefully loaded with eye candy in the form of models and the actions feel natural and unrehearsed, a naturist watching this film would feel they’re just witnessing another normal day. Delightful and

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comforting, to this naturist, at least.

(As a side note, I noticed a lack of towel usage when people sat on chairs – is this a sign of when this film was made? Is towel etiquette recent in nudist culture?)

Clearly the makers had fun, and it's easy to see why *The Magic Glasses* is considered a classic. Highly recommended.

Our second film is 1957's *Gone With the Sun* (director not credited), a fifty minutes color silent film which reminded me of the experimental films made by the Navajo Nation in the mid-Sixties. These films were an exercise in seeing what would happen if anthropologists taught a native people they were observing to make their own documentaries. What kind of movie would result through the eyes and culture of such people? The results were a series of films known as *Navajo Film Themselves*. While I have not seen the entire film series, I did have the opportunity to see one of them, *Navajo Silversmith*, a few decades back when I was in graduate school. In *Navajo Silversmith*, which is about twenty minutes long, the majority of the film centers around the silversmith in question walking around in nature, looking for the raw materials for his craft and the camera focusing on the surrounding landscape rather than the silversmith himself; and only the last five minutes or so of the film actually shows him working metal into objects for wear. While a non-Navajo may view this as an odd way to document the art of Native American metalworking, to a member of the Navajo tribe the film seems natural: walking is a predominant theme of Navajo myths and stories, and the landscape shots serve the dual purpose of showing various named locations in Navajo culture (each location name having a relevant story associated with it) and the camera avoiding eye contact with the silversmith – eye contact being something Navajo typically only do with very special, close, or important people in their lives. So this film can be seen as being quintessentially Navajo, for these reasons. There is a deeper narrative that those not aware of the Navajo way of life would not appreciate due to their ignorance.

Similarly, *Gone With the Sun* is very much a naturist film through and through: meet the White family, whose children are perpetually in poor health. Enter the Browns (portrayed by the same actors as played "Bill & Mary" in *The Magic Glasses*), who move in next door. They get along well with their new neighbors until it turns out the Browns are nudists, which cause the Whites great discomfort.

But soon a conspiracy (I call it that because, in the end, it feels like one) of their neighbors, the family doctor, and the White's daughter's schoolteacher convince the family to try nudism for the sake of their children's health. (The White's pastor may be involved, too, but this is not made clear.)

After some balking, they make it to Squaw Mountain Ranch. And after some resistance and another montage of nudist activity, another family is converted to the ways of naturism. (With the same full-frontal views of normal, everyday bodies as seen in the other film.)

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Oh no! It seems our neighbors are nudists!



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Like *Navajo Silversmith*, *Gone With the Sun* emphasizes the filmmakers' values: exposure to sun and fresh air for health, naturists are just everyday people like your neighbors, and so on and so forth. As the children are exposed to the natural world, their sickly dispositions near-miraculously get better and they take to the new lifestyle like ducks to water. There is also an exploration of the prudish, non-body acceptance attitudes of the day that nudists always come across when trying to persuade others to try a day or weekend at a resort.

The film ends with a nude barbecue in the Brown's backyard along with scenes of further body acceptance and happiness by the children and their families.

While I cannot recommend this film as strongly as *The Magic Glasses*, it is still a fun little film despite it getting a little preachy at times. Well worth a view.

In the end, the SMART Club films are fine examples of what naturists can do for themselves with camera and editing equipment, and are good films for amateur anthropologists to view when studying the sociocultural ways and means of this often misunderstood segment of humanity.

In the Land of the War Canoes can be found in its entirety on YouTube. *Navajo Silversmith* and the rest of the *Navajo Film Themselves* series is available on DVD through the Penn Museum at the immodest price of \$250.00.

[Editor's Note: *The Magic Glasses* and *Gone With The Sun* can be viewed for free through the NEF Research Library Digital Lending program. If you're a library patron (free to sign up), request films "video248" and "video234".]



Last Month's "Caption This!" Winner



Tickle Tickle Tickle!

- Submitted by Bill



Morgensonne (Morning Sun) by Franz Müller-Münster.

See the April issue of this newsletter for more about Franz Müller-Münster.

Hey! We want to see you at the Eastern Naturist Festival at Eastover Resort!

[NAC and NEF are grateful that this small group of local naturists have succeeded in securing this venue for a festival. We are glad to assist them by promoting, supporting, and being a part of this festival. We look forward to seeing you there!]

Return to the sprawling 600 acre Eastover Estate in Lenox, Massachusetts for a fabulous Eastern Naturist Festival July 14 - 17, 2022 and have loads of fun in the sun at a venue naturists had been asking to return to for years, but were unable until now!

Enjoy four days and three nights of fun-filled naturist activities, workshops, seminars, dancing and more at this five star venue that recently underwent a multi-million dollar total renovation and upgrade, all at varying all-Inclusive Per Person rates that include meals, accommodations, and taxes. Choose from private single room, 2-person shared room, 4-person shared room, dormitory shared room, camping or RV. Make your selections with private or shared baths.

To register and book your stay at Eastover Estate, use this online registration link setup for this event by the venue at <http://www.eastover.com/workshop/enatfestival2022> and use the book, lodging, meals, taxes, all inclusive here button. Registration deadline is June 15th, 2022.

(Please note that all venue registrations are based on a Per Person all-inclusive rate, not per room, or campsite. Therefore if you have arranged to share a room with another individual, or group of individuals who are attending the event and whom have properly registered individually; specify this in the Notes section)

To sign-up and apply to volunteer at the Eastern Naturist Festival at Eastover Estate 2022 and help make it a success for everyone by lending some of your time, skills, and talents; use this link to sign up and apply for volunteering or donations <https://timecounts.org/enatfestival>

For more details, see the April newsletter.

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

This "Nudist Pictorial" is featured in *Sunshine & Health*, April, 1958. The couple appear to be using rakes among large rocks, which can't be going very well. What are they thinking? What are they saying?

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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Newsletters provide you with original content about:

- ▶ the activist efforts of the Naturist Action Committee,
- ▶ the educational & public outreach efforts of the Naturist Education Foundation, &
- ▶ the preservation of naturist history by the NEF Research Library.

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Please support NAC with its mission of naturist activism set forth by Lee Baxandall. NAC relies entirely on donations from generous naturists like you, now more than ever. Donations are accepted online or by mail.

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Please support NEF with its mission of naturist education and public outreach set forth by Lee Baxandall. NEF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all donations to NEF are tax-deductible. Donations are accepted online or by mail.

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