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

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Nudist Resorts at a Crossroads

By Bill Schroer, Chair, Naturist Action Committee

The history of American nudists needing a place to be nude is as old as nudism in America. Kurt Barthel, credited with introducing nudism to North America, wrote of his struggles to find a gym to keep his nudists occupied in healthy activities during the winter months (of 1931) after a successful summer at his farm. (At the time “physical culture” was a key component of the nudist philosophy and Barthel incorporated this thinking into his outline of what nudism meant and its benefits.)

“Nudism is not merely loafing in the sunshine, but body building, physical culture in the keenest sense of the word”, and (in New York) “a well-equipped gym...is sufficient to continue the good work of the summer...”

Whether struggling to find winter quarters in New York for his club members or a new location for his growing nudist organization “The Woodland Club”, Barthel engaged in a search (in January 1932) of “every defunct farm within a 50 mile radius of the city...we landed it at last: a most suitable and beautiful piece of land with plenty of water, and only 35 miles distant from the city.”

The need to find a piece of land both private enough to allow for nudists to take part in their outdoor activities of sunbathing, swimming, volleyball, aerobics, etc. while at the same time near enough to metropolitan areas to be accessible was the challenge faced by those organizing nudist clubs across America, not just Barthel.

As nudism gained popularity and favor throughout the 30's and (after WWII) more so in the 40's (as returning soldiers, having seen the more relaxed dress codes and bathing beaches in Europe, wanted to try this for themselves) nudist club organizers continued to search for ideal locations for their clubs.

While progress was made and more clubs were established to meet the growing demand in different parts of the country, there were some component parts of the clubs that distorted or impacted their role as a growth industry in the American free market.

These component parts of the early nudist clubs included the following:

(1) Public nudism...even on private property was illegal. Not only did the

property have to be secluded...usually in a rural largely unpopulated area, it had to be established in where the neighbors did not strenuously object. Examples of clubs/resorts which succeeded or failed because of the ability or inability of the club owners to co-opt the community exist throughout nudist club history...up to the present day.

(2) As nudism was illegal, early clubs were often informal affairs with the organization existing more as a collective than a formal business. Members contributed to the purchase of land and facilities...then dues were collected to maintain the property, pay taxes, etc. Some clubs were co-ops, such as Sky Farm in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, established in 1932 and considered the first official nudist club in the country. Of the 57 cabins, some are privately owned, others are rental and there is a lodge. Members both contribute financially and participate in work projects.

(3) As co-op arrangements didn't work in every situation, many clubs were started and developed by one or two couples. These “mom and pop” clubs/resorts were located in similarly obscure locations and the owners added amenities and improvements as they could afford them. “Sweat equity” was a way to affordably build the resort and

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while there was not a lot of money to be made, couples could live reasonably comfortable and live their passion...as nudists.

(4) An additional component of the nudist resort environment was a limit to the size/scale of most resorts. The combination of questionable legality, the potential opposition of the local church or civic leaders and fears of being raided or closed down served as a disincentive to significant marketing efforts. Additionally, nudism wasn't attracting corporate or even large private investment. Most resorts maintained a low profile...and a low profile and the fact most nudists were (and are) "in the closet", and therefore "word of mouth" advertising did not (and does not) build demand as would happen in more conventional products/services kept resorts modest in size/scale.

(5) The above set of factors resulted in Nudism not being a highly profitable business in America. The reason? Scale matters in the hospitality industry, and for the above reasons, most nudist resorts couldn't generate the scale needed to fully amortize fixed costs and provide cash for maintenance and upgrades. The typical resort didn't throw off enough cash to fully compensate the owners who continued to support their dream through their own labor and sacrifice. It also didn't provide enough profit to significantly improve the quality of the resort. Resorts often started as primitive campgrounds with services and amenities gradually added...often painfully slowly, but were often not enough to raise the profile of the resort beyond the campground/trailer park status. This is not true in all cases and there are examples of first class nudist resorts that have grown in size and quality of amenities and accommodations. However, the larger majority of nudist clubs/resorts existed in the grey area of surviving - not thriving - but with deferred maintenance and upgrading of facilities/amenities waiting too long.

Fast forward 40 years. Three factors are jeopardizing the future of many of these smaller/marginal nudist resorts in America:

(1) The nudist resort originally established 35 miles outside of town is now on the outskirts of towns and cities that have grown dramatically. The remote "defunct farm" which was originally purchased for a song is now highly valued and desirable real estate.

(2) The owners, often one or two couples...are tired and want to retire. They have built their dream through sweat equity and sacrifice and now want to be compensated for their years of privation and toil.

(3) However, the nudist resort as a business still does not generate enough cash to both compensate new owners and address the debt service most potential owners would need to absorb as a result of the price the current owners need to "cash out". The economics of small resorts haven't changed. The difference is the resort is now too costly for new owners to justify the price given the CAP rate. (In the world of commercial real estate properties are bought and sold based on the "CAP" rate. Capitalization rates, are measures used to estimate and compare the rates of return on a commercial real estate property. CAP rates are calculated by dividing the property's net operating income (NOI) from its property asset value.) Given this metric most nudist resorts would have a failing CAP rate, resulting in their lack of salability as a nudist resort.

As a result, nudist resorts are failing to be continued to a new generation as viable businesses. In the past 5-10 years a quick review reveals the following resorts have transitioned from nudist resorts to some other business:

Resort	Location	Old Status	New Status
Sunshine Gardens	Michigan	Family Nudist Resort	Textile Campground
Juniper Woods	New York	Family Nudist Resort	Textile Campground
Whispering Oaks	Michigan	Seasonal Nudist Campground	Uncertain
Berkshire Vista	Mass.	Family Nudist Resort	Closing end of 2022, will not be nude
Sun Ray Hills	Wisconsin	Seasonal Nudist Campground	Gravel Pit
Sun Meadow	Idaho	Family Nudist Resort	Textile RV Campground

These are only the ones reasonably recent and visible. There may be more...and there will be more. For, while the individual circumstances for each closure may vary somewhat, in most cases the profit potential for a nudist resort to transition to some other purpose exceeds what could be generated if continued as a nudist resort.

What is the solution if there is one? The implications are sobering, as without nudist resorts the American public will have few opportunities to practice (or for newcomers "try out") nudism in a setting designed for that purpose. We'll explore potential alternative solutions and ideas to keep nudist resorts nude in the next installment of this article.

Send comments or questions to Bill Schroer at Bill.Schroer@NaturistEducation.org 


Family Youth Camp at Sunsport Gardens

The 15th Annual Naturist Family Youth Camp takes place at Sunsport Gardens Family Naturist Resort July 9-17.

Families from across the country will gather for a clothesfree week of fun and growth. Campers are offered a great variety of activities whether their interests are arts and crafts, exploring nature, movie making, sports, science, gardening, or drama. Special emphasis is placed on caring, nonjudgmental interpersonal relations. Workshops on being proud of who we are, body acceptance, listening and speaking skills, and conflict resolution help establish an atmosphere of caring about each other's feelings and positive relationships. Daily children will enjoy canoeing and kayaking, campfires, exploring nature, arts and crafts, and lots of time in Sunsport's 87 degree pool. There is always a camp variety show and a fun-filled day playing in the sand and water at clothing-optional Haulover Beach. The camp is entirely nude (campers,

parents, and counselors) which facilitates activities best done clothesfree such as a water slide, tie dye, body painting, messy games, and a 10-foot ice cream sundae with as much landing on bodies as in mouths. Parents and counselors often share their skills with campers including painting, relaxation exercises, rocket building and launching, boating, producing a claymation video, and karaoke.

At the camp, all children (ages 5-17) grow in self-confidence, independence, creativity, and skills while having great fun. Campers have served as junior counselors as teens and then graduated to becoming counselors. Parents or grandparents are encouraged to attend the camp participating as much or little as they like. Campers may stay with their parents or in their own tents. Today's campers may become tomorrow's naturist leaders. Donations to help keep the tuition for campers low will be gratefully appreciated. Providing three healthy and delicious meals each day for campers and counselors is the largest expense. Registration forms and a gallery of camp photos and claymation videos from past years are on Sunsport's website, www.sunsportgardens.com.

For more information, contact Morley Schloss at morleynaturist@hotmail.com, 561-791-1361, or 561-254-9878. 

Eastern Naturist Festival

[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!

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.

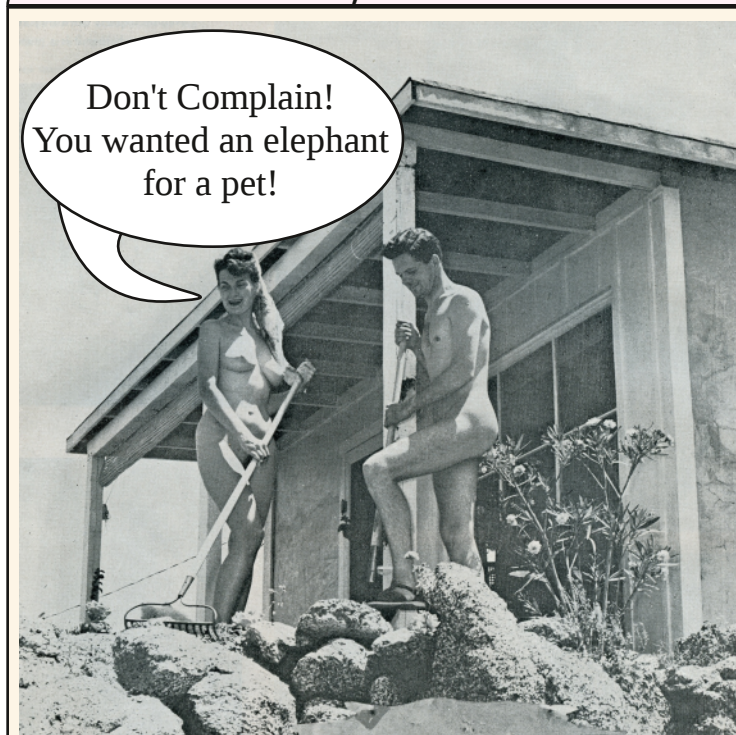
To register and book your stay at Eastover Estate, use this online registration link setup for this event by the venue at <http://www.eastover.com/workshop/enatfestival2022> and use the book, lodging, meals, taxes, all inclusive here button. Registration deadline is June 15th, 2022.

(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. 

Last Month's "Caption This!" Winner



- Submitted by Dave Smith

Honorable Mentions:

- "This is the perfect spot for our rock garden!"
- Submitted by Bob Green
- "I don't think these are potatoes, Charlie!"
- Submitted by John Wells

Film Review: Naked – As Nature Intended. (1961)

By Reb Belstner

A blurb on the back of the DVD case makes this movie sound most intriguing:

An ex-cop carries out a venomous vendetta in the narcotics underworld!

Cool, you might think; a nudist film with a gritty plot! How will they work all this into the notion of nudity being a natural state of being?

Well, they don't. There is no ex-cop character, no scenes of the narcotics underworld, and no vendetta... and having watched this film, I can understand the marketer's decision to do a misleading write-up: this is an all-around terrible movie. Yes, there are pretty women wandering around naked, but that only comes in the last fifteen to twenty minutes of this hour-long mess.

The film's star, Pamela Green, is on record stating that the film itself was mostly unplanned – and therefore mostly unscripted – and it shows... at times almost painfully.

The movie opens with a long shot of a beach on which we witness a naked (save for the ubiquitous strategically placed towel) Pamela approach and pass the camera, followed by a fade to a view of director Harrison Marks' face. I'm surprised Mr. Marks was confident enough in this film to place his mug on it. Personally, I'd have worn Groucho Glasses if I were him.

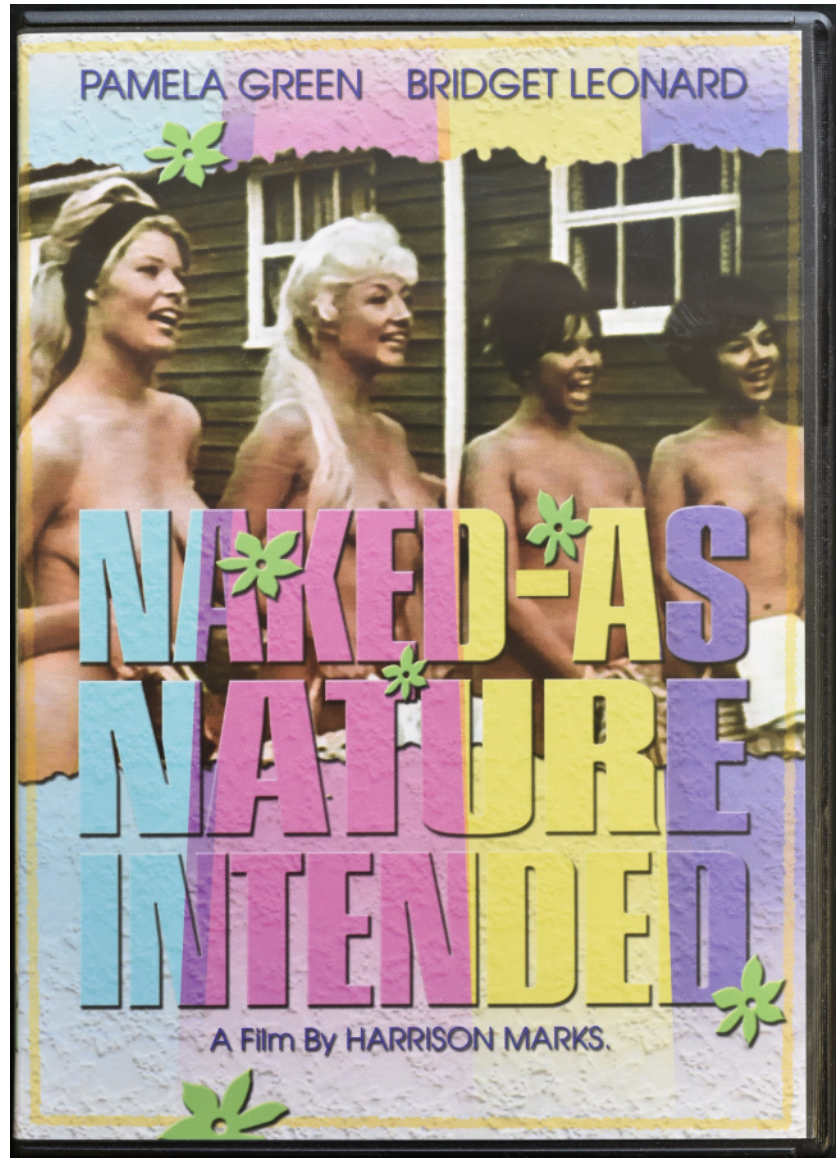
Then, over scenes of office work featuring a woman named Petrina taking dictation, we are treated to the usual sort of voice-over we come to expect from films of this nature. ("Ever felt like going on a holiday? A nudist holiday?") The voice-over also alludes to the sexism of the day by more or less referring to Petrina as office eye candy.

We then meet Jackie, a shoe shop girl working with a difficult customer; followed by a reintroduction to Pamela, who is a dancer (because of course she is! Pamela's the star, after all!) - prancing in a night club wearing a bikini while incongruously dancing to the soundtrack.

After the three get off work, they decide to borrow an enormous (by British standards) car and go on holiday with the ultimate destination of the beaches at Land's End. All well and good, the voice-over tells us... but how exactly did this trio become confirmed nudists as a result of this adventure?

Enter Bridget and Angela, two gas station attendants off to the same location for the weekend

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where (oh, my!) there happens to be a nudist resort. Which is fine because these gals are “ardent nudists” (they are always “nudists”, never “naturists” in this movie, which is at least honest marketing).

What follows is a boring travelogue consisting of shots of the car driving along the road, the trio of Pamela, Jackie, and Petrina stopping at various locales to wander about seemingly without purpose – even as tourists – and contrasting shots of Bridget and Angela wandering in the same direction as our heroines while “roughing it” in the English countryside; particularly across farms, where they meet herds of cows and geese. Again: no nudity until the last portion of the film, which would be fine if the intervening material weren’t so boring.

When the original trio stop off at Stonehenge and wander about I felt there was a missed opportunity for the voice-over to talk about the modern (circa 1950s) neo-pagan practice to perform rituals “skyclad”, which, of course, is a euphemism for “naked”. This could have been a great lead-in to a running discussion of possible links between pre-Christian religions of Great Britain and the modern practices of naturism... but I doubt anything like that was ever on the filmmakers’ minds. As Storey’s *Cinema au Naturel* states, Marks and Green were making this film in hopes of recouping some financial losses from other nudie publication and film ventures.

Another missed opportunity: the “roughing it” Bridget and Angela stop to spend the night by a haystack at a farm. Angela starts taking off her sweater and the camera quickly cuts to a laughing Bridget, who starts to unbutton her blouse as the camera fades to black. The voice-over gives a passing mention of the nudist lifestyle making the girls healthy and ready to withstand a night out in nature. Some shots of the two enjoying the sunset in the buff while the narrator further discourses on the health benefits of the lifestyle would have given the film legitimacy and a more structured feel; and given the audience a little more jiggle for their dollar, thus far.

As our original trio of Pamela, Jackie, and Petrina drive across the land on their way to Cornwall, they are greeted by the same actor (credited as Stuart Samuels) portraying a variety of characters, including a guide at Stonehenge, a waiter, a sea captain, and a Shakespearean actor. At one moment Jackie seems to recognize the actor in one of his guises, but then shakes it off in what I suppose was supposed to be a fourth-wall-breaking comedic moment. Oh, well.

In one scene that made me scratch my head, the two groups of women pass by one another in the town of Clovelley. I suppose this is a foreshadowing moment, but with Pamela, Jackie, and Petrina making the trip by car, how did the hoofing-it duo of Bridget and Angela manage to catch up with them so quickly?

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The answer may lie in when the trio get into car trouble and go through a spell of acting helpless while traffic backs up behind them. Oh, the jokes about women drivers simply roll off the tongue, I tell ya!

Then Pamela, Jackie, and Petrina finally make it to the beach! The girls change back into their bikinis and romp about the sands, rock, and surf (again, it seems, without much direction... you can almost hear the director yelling: "Frolic, damn it! Frolic!").


While Jackie and Petrina do their own thing, Pamela wanders off into the distance and just so happens to cross into the territory of the nudist resort where she meets – who else? – Bridget and Angela!

Pamela talks with the duo about nudism and quickly wants to invite Jackie and Petrina over to join in on the conversation. Soon, Bridget and Angela have convinced the other three to get naked in what has to be the shortest "just give it a try" winning argument in nudist film history.

The rest of the film consists of short vignettes of the five women wandering the beach and the resort. (Frolic! Frolic! Frolic!) And, yes, there is the required beach ball in all this, thrown in almost as an afterthought. To the director's credit, there are some shots of "normal" – which is to say non-model/actress – members of the resort and their small children to take the edge off of what is otherwise voyeur fare. But that's only during the last ten minutes of the movie.

And at the 42:01 mark we see Pamela in what appears to be the climactic scene, hearkening back to the movie's opening where she's wandering the beach and is about to traipse through one of the many pools of water scattered about the sands. Again, according to Storey, one of these pools was actually six feet deep and Pamela decided to go in anyway, which creates an unexpected bit of humor at this point in the film (and is supposed to be the most memorable part of the film – which doesn't say much).

Then the film wraps up with scenes of outdoor showering! Gardening! Swing sets! Intense hammocking! But no volleyball? Maybe that's an American nudist thing... And finally, everyone gathers at the swimming pool to end what appears to have been an otherwise glorious day with the narrator declaring that he, too, may give this nudism thing a try.

Despite going on at length about this movie, I cannot recommend it. Even the films of Doris Wishman give you something resembling a story line and plot while unapologetically showing off female flesh. *Naked – As Nature Intended* is a floundering mess that could have accomplished just as much with merely showing the last twenty to twenty-five minutes. The late, great Gene Siskel would have said of this film: "That's an hour of my life I'm not getting back." I prefer to think of it in more positive terms: "I watched this movie so you didn't have to." 



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

From *Nude Lark* #10, one of many of the Elysium publications of the 1960's, this photo shows three beer cans and a cute young lady with a big grin. What Independence Day captions can you think of?

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.

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