



Volume 4, Number 12.

December, 2023

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

Assembled and published by Doug.Hickok@NaturistEducation.org. Mail: PO Box 132, Oshkosh, Wi., USA. 54903. Tel: (920) 415-2900

The Case for Naturist Activism

As 2023 winds down, it's essential to acknowledge that it was an extraordinarily challenging year for naturists. In May, social media influencers and bloggers took aim at nude resorts and beaches, questioning why these spaces are not designated for adults only. Some of these posts were picked up by national outlets. In June, nudity at Pride events came under fire, with a June 28 *Newsweek* headline asking, "Why Were They Not Arrested?" Another news report labeled World Naked Bike participants as "pedal-philes." Others condemned the nudity at Bay to Breakers and the Fremont Solstice Parade. There were an unusual number of articles questioning what to do about naked neighbors sunning in their backyards or wandering by the windows of their apartment buildings.

Beaches, resorts, and events that have operated without incident and with positive publicity for decades were suddenly in the crosshairs of a generally unsympathetic, if not thoroughly hostile public. There was a growing perception that social nudity in public spaces represented a legitimate threat. One of the most troubling examples occurred in Wisconsin, where a controversy surrounding the Madison WNBR led to a pair of bills that would effectively ban nudity and criminalize *intentional* exposure rather than *indecent* exposure. If and when these bills are signed into law, they will effectively end any hopes of regaining Mazo Beach as a nude beach, and may well serve as a template for other state legislatures seeking to shut down events like the WNBR, nude beaches, or even nudist resorts.

Other spaces faced challenges from city planners and developers. Hanlan's Point Beach narrowly averted a redevelopment plan that could have ended decades of nude

use. More recently, Seattle officials announced a plan to build a children's playground at Denny Blaine Park, bringing into question the fate of yet another nude beach.

At the same time, more of our private clubs and resorts were closing, transitioning into textile spaces, or going up for sale. A trend that began in the southeast and continued in the northeast reached California this summer when one major resort, Deanza Springs, announced it would no longer permit nudity while Olive Dell and Lupin Lodge were listed for sale on real estate sites. Desert Sun Resort in Palm Springs (home of the Lee R. Baxandall Bridge) was sold, and its future as a nude resort is uncertain. While the closure of the rural mom-and-pop campgrounds hasn't been entirely unanticipated, the prospect of losing so many of the big California resorts that nudists have long taken for granted sent shockwaves throughout our communities and led many to express concern about the sustainability of their favorite resorts or clubs.

In the summer of 2023, the threats to a sustainable naturist movement emerged from outside and within. Growing political divisions and pandemic fatigue, combined with a network of social media platforms where controversy fuels engagement (which fuels revenues), have contributed to an increasingly angry and unproductive public discourse. But as we've observed this summer, sometimes blowing off steam by fighting with strangers on social media can evolve into a focused attack on one group or subculture. Facts are replaced by emotions, which can quickly escalate into a threatening situation.

[Continued on next page...]

[Continued from previous page.]

In the early days of NAC, responding to threats was simply a matter of monitoring bills and encouraging our constituents to react accordingly. Lobbyists were employed to push back against bills that directly or indirectly targeted naturists. Today, the threats have changed, and so must our response. As we have seen this year, a sensationalistic social media post can grow into a mainstream news story and rapidly shift public opinion against us. Legislative action might follow. This happened with the various anti-drag and anti-trans bills that emerged throughout the country early in the year, as well as with this summer's Madison WNBR controversy. The next anti-naturist initiative might not begin in a legislative committee; it might start with a social media post or a negative news story.

What can naturists do?

We must rebuild our constituency and embrace a more active role in our communities to confront these new threats. Only some naturists can be or want to be an activist, but effective activism is much easier and less time-consuming than many might imagine. Consider these steps.


- ▶ **Educate yourself and others:** Gain a deeper understanding of the naturist movement, its history, achievements, and setbacks. Read news articles, and naturist publications, blogs, and books. Raise awareness. Share your knowledge with your friends, family, and social media followers.
- ▶ **Participate in a naturist group or club:** Connect with naturist organizations, groups, or clubs. Instead of asking about member benefits, ask what you can do to contribute to the organization's or club's mission. Many groups and clubs have diverse volunteer opportunities available.
- ▶ **Donate:** Non-profit organizations like NAC often rely solely on the donations of their constituents. Every dollar helps.

One way to assist NAC and its mission is to consider becoming an Area Representative. Too often, news of a bad bill or an emerging threat on social media comes to our attention when we read about it on a news website. We need people on the ground and online, in every region, to monitor these situations in real time before they erupt into a more significant problem. We need the visibility of this constituency to demonstrate to our neighbors that we are no threat and present no danger, as it's all too easy to create a false narrative or a conspiracy theory around a group that is largely silent and practically invisible.

Please contact us for more information on the Area Representative program. As an organization operated solely by volunteers, NAC also needs your financial support. You can make a secure donation through the NAC website.

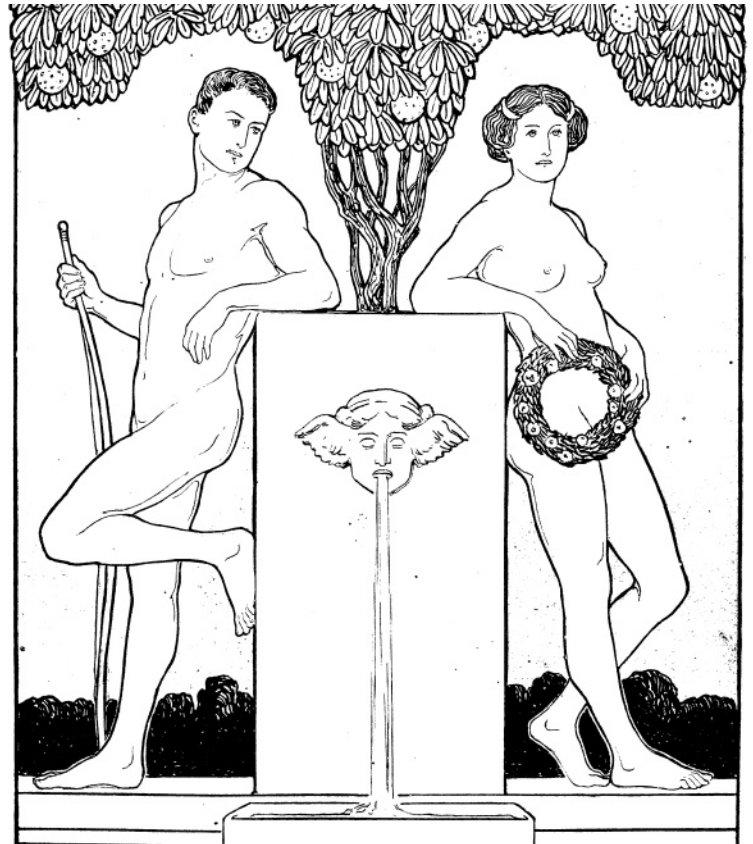
Remember, activism takes many forms, and there is no one right way to do it. You don't have to write letters to elected officials or march with a sign in a protest. And it doesn't have to be a full-time commitment to make a positive impact.

If not you, WHO? If not now, WHEN?

Please consider sharing a small amount of time working together with NAC to help preserve our naturist rights. 



[Brian Krassenstein was the person who initially Tweeted outrage over Florida's nude beaches, which led to the Newsweek article encouraging Governor DeSantis to take aim at naturists. Twitter/X isn't the only social media platform rewarding sensationalism.]



What is “Public” Anyway?

By Doug Hickok

Soon after the Wisconsin legislators originally proposed updates to the nudity laws, NAC raised the concern during AANR's Government Affairs Team (GAT) October meeting. (For those who don't know, GAT has been generously inviting NAC to these meetings to increase awareness to everything going on and help with collaboration between the organizations.)

Another invitee, with strong historical ties to NAC and decades of advocacy for nudity on public lands, rather surprisingly told NAC to “look for the word ‘public’” and made the case that it doesn't impact naturists. Presumably, because Mazo Beach is currently closed (to everyone) and other clubs are private.

The law doesn't define what “public” actually means. Come to find out, it does NOT mean what you'd expect.

Just to recap the two proposed laws. AB503/SB478 seeks to replace the word “indecent” with the word “intentional”, so it reads as: “Intentionally exposes genitals or pubic area in a public area”. In the case of the World Naked Bike Ride, their conduct isn't indecent but the nudity is intentional. AB504/SB477 is more direct, stating: “Whoever intentionally causes a child to attend an event at which a group of participants over the age of 18 intentionally expose their intimate parts in a public area is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor”.

On October 31st, the Assembly bills had a public hearing. The speakers did an excellent job pointing out the wide-ranging impact of the bills. The bills would impact nudists. The bills would impact artists. The bills infringe on parental rights. The bills infringe on First Amendment rights.

The thing most people missed during this committee meeting was very brief and early on. [WisEye.org video at 7m30s.] The Chairman asked the Legislative Council for clarification on the law and asked about any related case law. The Legislative Council, as part of his response, stated:

“The term ‘public area’ is not defined. The jury instruction for this statute interprets it to mean ‘in such a place or manner that the person knows or has reason to know that the conduct is observable by or in the presence of other persons’”.

Let that sink in for a moment. For this law, any place where you are not alone is considered “public” because the conduct is observable by another person. The phrase “public area” misleadingly includes all private locations as well.

This would criminalize all nude recreation, public and private. The Legislative Council specifically confirmed it would criminalize being nude in your own backyard. It would criminalize the WNBR, artists, and public performances that include any hint of nudity. It goes well beyond that.

Do you like being intimate with your partner? Well, that is intentional exposure that is observable by another person, so you're a criminal.

Parents who take their kids to a public pool, there are nude adults in the changing room, so all the adults including the parents would be criminalized. Same thing with parents taking their kids to a high school sporting event. Some of those students in the locker room might be over 18.

Based on the language, this even extends into public restrooms. Dropping your pants is intentional, and unless the stalls completely block the view, that brief nudity happens “in the presence of other persons”. They may not even need to witness it directly.

Prior to the Assembly committee vote on Nov. 16th, I alerted all 15 in the committee of the unintended consequences of these bills. All 5 Democrats were opposed, and all 10 Republicans voted in favor of the bills. I'm a constituent in one of the Republican's districts and I highly doubt anyone else in his district reached out about these bills, so his vote is most upsetting to me. The same happened for the Senate committee on Nov. 28th. I contacted all of them, and the party-line vote of 3 to 2 passed the bill. (My contact was in addition to NAC's efforts.)

These laws criminalize everyone -- even the Republican legislators that turn a blind eye to all public comments and keep pushing to approve them. Assuming the trend continues and they get voted into law... If you happen to see them in a public restroom, or with their kids at a public pool, just know that they want you to call the police and report their criminal behavior. Make sure to cite Wisconsin statutes 944.20(1)(b) and 948.105. The law will be tested in court at some point, and I'd rather it be with them.



Meanwhile... in Madison...

Where are the laws against this?

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/neo-nazis-march-through-madison-yelling-there-will-be-blood?ref=scroll>

Neo-Nazis March Through Madison Yelling ‘There Will Be Blood’

SHOW YOUR FACES

They wore masks, of course.



Allison Quinn
News Editor Updated Nov. 19, 2023 3:27AM EST / Published Nov. 18, 2023 5:40PM EST





Like this newsletter? Sign up today and be notified each month!

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.

Be in the loop with the **FREE** newsletter!

Sign up on the newsletter page:

<http://naturisteducation.org/library/newsletters.html>



By signing up, you'll also get occasional NAC Action Alerts, Advisories, and Updates too.

NAC is on Facebook and Twitter too!
<https://Facebook.com/NaturistAction/>
<https://Twitter.com/NaturistAction/>

Like Our Efforts? Here's a great way to help out:

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.

NaturistAction.org/donate

NAC
 P.O. Box 132
 Oshkosh, WI 54903



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.

NaturistEducation.org/donate

NEF
 P.O. Box 132
 Oshkosh, WI 54903

