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

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## A Reason

By Sigmund Snider

The so-called “graying of naturism” has become an almost tiresome conversation, one that began in mid-century nudist magazines and continues today in online social media discussions. It’s tiresome, because the causes and solutions tend to include the same oft-regurgitated suppositions and stereotypes. There are theories that young people lack the finances to travel, or to purchase resort memberships, and that discounts are the answer. There are assumptions that resorts need more diverse recreational activities, or more current music. Less shuffleboard, more video games, etc.

It’s important to acknowledge that these discussions all rely on the same premise, that naturists are, first and foremost, consumers, and that naturist business owners simply need to provide a more attractive product to lure in more consumers. Perhaps this is a flawed premise, symptomatic of a movement that occasionally forgets its principles and philosophies in its push to remain economically viable. In these discussions, there’s a subtle acknowledgment that naturist businesses and organizations are seeking customers, subscribers, and paying members, but not volunteers, advocates, nor leaders. A more attractive product is almost always the agreed-upon solution.

Was Lee Baxandall onto something, when he said at the 1990 International Gathering in Belezy France that “The young have to have a reason to be in the movement, instead of just go(ing) out to one of the islands and tak(ing) off their clothes?” At the gathering, Baxandall makes reference to something he calls “the propaganda of the deed,” a term he uses elsewhere, including the June 1977 issue of *Free Beaches*. He explains that this is different than the naturist publisher’s and business owner’s “propaganda of the word,” the slogans and public relations activities used to draw in new readers and members. The “propaganda of the deed” represents a depiction of naturism in

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“The young have to have a reason to be in the movement.”

- Lee Baxandall, speaking at the International Gathering in Belezy France, July, 1990

*Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
We couldn't achieve our goals  
if it wasn't for you...*



*The Naturist Action Committee*

*The Naturist Education Foundation*

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action, a proclamation that “being nude is an enhancement to performing an activity already involving of people.” This approach, Baxandall insists, “lends variety, depth and permanence. It is no longer just the ability to be in a social group where the clothing falls away.”

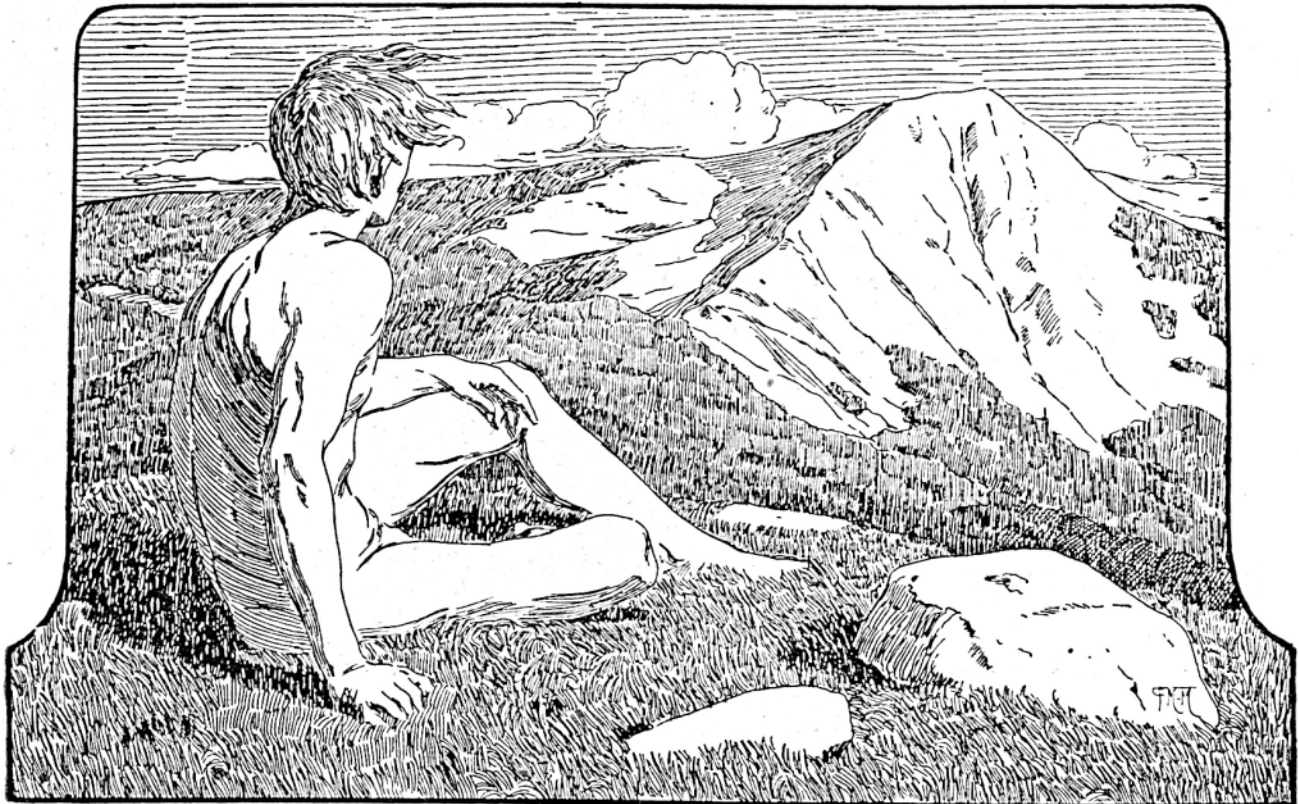
To see Baxandall’s “propaganda of the deed” at work, one needs only to review a few issues of his *Clothed With The Sun* and *Nude & Natural* magazines. Baxandall’s naturism was purposefully diverse, even when his commitment to inclusion drew the scorn of the old-school nudist establishment, and even some of his readers. His publications explored feminism, censorship and bigotry, government overreach, ecology and environmentalism. SIGs emerged to address all kinds of hobbies and interests. Baxandall offered information on beaches, resorts, campgrounds and gatherings. But more importantly, he gave people *reasons to be involved*.

In Belezy, Baxandall states that he avoided the “distribution-building trap” with his Free Beaches newspaper in the seventies, because it was focused on “people already involved in nude beaches,” and was “not for a mass readership.” He goes on to say that with the launch of *Clothed With The Sun* in 1980, “limited ambitions were still firmly adhered to.” He refers to his “microcosmic premise,” the idea that his organization and publication would focus on expanding access to and expressions of naturism, while moving its ideas of body acceptance into the mainstream, without necessarily seeking to convert everyone into a card-carrying naturist. “I don’t think in terms of compromises. Instead, I propose these integrations of nudity.” It was a nation of 200 million readers in 1990, he notes, “and we were not going to exploit this huge and coherent market to the full.”

It’s clear from social media discussions that a good number of young people, as Baxandall suggested, are looking for *reasons to be involved*. Many want to know what naturism has to say about gender, and why so many clubs use gender as a basis for admission. Some want to know how naturism is connected to environmental concerns, social equality, body autonomy, and how the movement connects to the world outside of the clubs. There’s a need to believe that naturism *means something*.

But is today’s naturist movement, which is a much different beast than it was in 1990, still free to take positions on conceivably controversial and divisive topics, when the focus has shifted to subscriptions, memberships, and resort admissions? And if the movement has become customer-focused, rather than principle-focused, how do we attract not just younger participants, but fresh waves of volunteers, advocates, and leaders? By working to broaden naturism’s appeal, have we diminished its focus and degraded its intensity, discarded the qualities that initially attracted so many passionate advocates and volunteers, many of whom are still leading the movement? How do we create a balance between supporting our businesses and publications and organizations (which we need) and reinvigorating the movement with purpose and meaning?

How do we give people, and particularly new generations, a *reason* to participate?





# Film Review: The First Nudie Musical

(Bruce Kimmel, director, 1975)

By Reb Belstner

First and foremost, this movie has not aged well.

It's hard to believe that the same year this picture was made, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* opened in theaters. Both movies are musicals with exploitation themes, both were written by a cast member, both are considered films with cult followings... but that is where the similarities end. *RHPS* would flop at the box office yet go on to become a cultural phenomenon with its midnight showings, shadow casts, and audience participation rituals. *Nudie Musical*, on the other hand, would blip across the radar with a modicum of success (being the number four movie for one week, per the extras on the DVD) before sinking out of sight and becoming the butt of many jokes in the entertainment industry.

Well, it's simply not a memorable film, even if it has a plethora of bare female breasts on display throughout its run time; although the amount of said breasts is far less than an average "nudist" film. The songs are not memorable, the characters (with one exception) are not memorable, and the paper-thin plot driving the Whole Big Joke of the movie ("Hey, gang! Let's save the studio by putting on a show! And it'll be SMUTTY!") is even in of itself so forgettable the audience is reminded of it more than once. But I am perhaps getting ahead of myself.

The songs, as I wrote above, are not memorable. Unlike *RHPS*, with its fans knowing all the lyrics to all the numbers – some of which are now karaoke staples – or tunes of other shock pictures such as "Uncle F\*\*ker" from *South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut* (you will be humming it after watching that movie), the songs of *Nudie Musical* generally feel contrived and otherwise forced. I was not the least bit surprised to learn from the *Making of...* documentary, found among the DVD extras, that many of the songs – such as "Dancing Dildos" – were literally written in ten minutes and often just the night before. And it shows. The lyrics are insipid, the melodies painfully predictable, and the arrangements of a bygone era – the Big Musical Comedy, which was stale in the Sixties, much less the Seventies, before this send-up was even dreamed of. Meanwhile *RHPS*, for example, uses various flavors of rock and pop to deliver the musical's score and songs, using hooks and bass grooves to give us, the audience, ear worms to remember the occasion by.

The characters, too, are not memorable. Stephen Nathan (as our main protagonist, Harry Schecter) does his best with the material provided, but doesn't seem to be able to break out of the two-dimensional restrictions of the character. Bruce Kimmel (the movie's screenwriter, songwriter, director, and portrayal of John, the director of the film-within-a-film) proves himself an auteur of the mediocre who cannot act his way out of a paper bag, in my humble opinion. And after listening to the commentary track, I realized Kimmel essentially plays himself, which in of itself is not that interesting, as personalities go.

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[Patrons of the NEF Research Library can view this film by asking for "Video226". The commentary tracks and extras are separate, so indicate if you'd like those too.]





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But there is a standout exception: Cindy Williams (of “Laverne & Shirley” fame) portrays Rosie, Harry Schecter’s secretary and love interest. While the character, as written, seems to have originally just been a court jester type, dispensing sarcastic commentary throughout the movie, Rosie gets the majority of the best lines (in this humble reviewer’s opinion). It turns out, not to my surprise, that Williams actually improvised many of her lines in this film, strutting her stuff as a trained and quite talented actress.

We open on a shot of Schecter Studio, Inc., transitioning to the chambers of the president’s office. Here we meet said president Harry Schecter, who cherishes the legacy his late father built for the studio, but sadly the place has slowly gone from producing legit films to making pornos, and is in danger of foreclosure from its creditors if it does not come up with a hit, and fast. In desperation, Harry conceives of a film to be titled “Come... Come, now...” and it will be the world’s First Nudie Musical! (Gimmicks being everything in show business.) It is during this opening scene we first meet Rosie, the assistant (Cindy Williams) whose ascerbic wit provides some much-needed comic relief from the rather unfunny establishment of a tired, well worn-film premise: “Hey, gang! Let’s save our beloved, dilapidated institution by putting on a show!”

Don’t get me wrong, this premise is tried and true when done right – *The Blues Brothers* being a somewhat contemporary kind of movie to *Nudie Musical* with a similar kind of plot (“Hey gang! Let’s put on a show to save the orphanage where we grew up!”).

And there is, of course, a catch – the creditors are giving Harry a mere two weeks to film this risky venture.

We are then treated to a heavy use of montages; one of which features Ron Howard making an appearance at a cattle call. (It should be noted that Cindy Williams’ show, “Laverne & Shirley” is a spin-off of “Happy Days”, which starred Ron Howard.)

Between montages we have various scenes of the film’s rushed production. And this is where I a question for you to ponder: are nudie-cuties to be conflated with “pornography”? I’m of the opinion it depends on one’s mindset. I personally do not consider films with lots of naked people prancing about without sexual acts being committed to be “porn”. Because, perhaps, of my naturist ideals, I do not generally find nakedness alone to be enough to arouse my prurient interests. For a young teenage boy, on the other hand, in the days before Pornhub and RedTube, this film and others like it would be considered the Holy Grail of VHS tapes smuggled into the house.

What are your thoughts? Please feel free to send them to me care of this newsletter. I welcome your input. [Emails to [Doug.Hickok@NaturistEducation.org](mailto:Doug.Hickok@NaturistEducation.org) will be forwarded to the author.]

This film also contains a modicum of simulated sex, which is supposed to be funny, but falls flat. The first full-

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frontal nudity we see is a blonde with the character name “Joy Full” who’s gyrations and moanings on the floor during her audition are particularly difficult to watch. And, in my humble opinion, simulated sex scenes do not necessarily make a film “pornographic”.

According to director Bruce Kimmel in the commentary track, his film is grounded in the past and “tradition”. *RHPS* looks forward while paying homage to the past. Take, for example the *Nudie Musical* number “Lesbian, Butch, Dyke” is especially gut-wrenching as it is clearly making light of stereotypes of female homosexuality. Meanwhile, the kink-aware “Sweet Transvestite” from *RHPS* is unapologetic about it’s then pro-fringe subject matter and has rightfully become one of the musical staples of the LGBTQA+ movement.

The film ends with the premiere of “Come... Come, now...” and shows us the tap dancing Big Finish of the picture: “Let Them Eat Cake” featuring women wearing only tuxedo jackets while the men are fully dressed in tuxes of their own. This is not surprising, as male full frontal nudity in film is a rarity until relatively recently.

And the movie ends with the film being a phenomenal success. The studio, now saved, gears up for a sequel to “Come... Come, now...” while Schecter and Rosie happily walk off into the night.

*The First Nudie Musical* comes with several extras: two commentary tracks and a “making of” documentary which also has its own commentary track.

The first commentary track features the director (Kimmel) and stars (Nathan James & Cindy Williams). I personally recommend watching the movie with this commentary track because it’s funnier than the straight-up film! The stars make fun of *Nudie Musical* while coming just short of hurting Kimmel’s feelings by telling him it sucks. Kimmel himself seems to not be far removed from the character he plays.

The second commentary track features Kimmel and Nick Redmond, the director of the “making of” documentary. It’s a straight-up commentary in which Kimmel and Redmond take things quite seriously, and as a consequence is not as much fun to watch and listen to as the first commentary track.

Next is *The Making of the First Nudie Musical*. Only worth viewing if you are die-hard fan or a “completest” when it comes to viewing DVDs. It does have a somewhat amusing commentary track of its own, but simply does not compare to that first commentary track mentioned above.

In the end, the greatest sin a movie can commit is to be forgettable, and this is one of them. Remember: I watched this movie so you don’t have to.



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