

Volume 5, Number 3.

March, 2024

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

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Update: Murfreesboro Community Decency Policy

As reported in the August 2023 *Pages of History* Newsletter, on June 15, 2023, the city of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, home to Tennessee's last nudist park, amended Chapter 21 of the Murfreesboro City Code to create a new section committed to Community Decency Standards that would expand the definition of "indecent behavior" to include "indecent exposure, public indecency, lewd behavior, nudity or sexual conduct." The amended code would have broadened "indecent materials or events" to include "printed materials, broadcasts, shows, parades, or other such displays that suggest, advertise, or display indecent behavior." The code change would have stipulated that "any Murfreesboro Police Officer shall have the authority to investigate suspected violations of this section." This change was reportedly sought in response to a permit granted to a local Pride festival and was an effort to deny future permits to an event that some in the community felt might include "indecent behavior."

On October 6, 2023, the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Tennessee, and Ballard Spahr, and Burr & Forman filed suit on behalf of the plaintiff, the Tennessee Equality Project Foundation, a statewide LGBTQ organization.

In a February 7, 2024, press release from the ACLU of Tennessee, the organization announced that a settlement had been reached:

"American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Tennessee, Ballard Spahr, and Burr & Forman have settled a lawsuit filed against the City of Murfreesboro over its anti-LGBTQ+ ordinance and local policy denying all special event permit requests from the Tennessee Equality Project (TEP), founder and host of the annual BoroPride Festival.



As part of the settlement, the city has agreed to pay \$500,000 to compensate for harm caused and reimburse attorneys' fees, repeal the anti-LGBTQ+ ordinance, and accept and process any future event permit applications from TEP."

The ordinance is an example of a newer trend in legal threats to naturists, in which broadly written laws designed to target a specific community, activity, or event could conceivably be used to attack naturist interests. Naturists must be vigilant in reviewing any proposed bills in their communities – even those that don't appear to directly target them – and appreciate that seeking exclusions or carve-outs is a shortsighted and ineffective response to bad bills. The naturist constituency is a small one. Alliances with communities targeted by discriminatory bills are essential.

Bad bills disrupt communities, create divisions, and often do more harm than good. Moreover, as we have seen with the Murfreesboro community decency matter, defending bad bills can become expensive for a community and its taxpayers, who are more interested in legislation that will positively impact their lives and those of their neighbors than bills that are written to confront an imagined problem.



Update: Naturist Activities Still Threatened in Wisconsin

By Jim Dickey

Depending on where you read your news, you might be led to believe that the Wisconsin anti-nudity fight is over, but the war is far from over with continuing attempts to criminalize public nudity throughout the state.

Yes, of the four introduced anti-nudity bills, the two Senate bills went through committees and public hearings before being passed by the Senate. Then sent to the Assembly, they were being reviewed by the Rules Committee when the Assembly adjourned at the closure of the legislative session. Running out of time, the bills were neither defeated nor enacted. *(For an excellent recap of the Wisconsin situation, please see Planet Nude's article: "Wisconsin's legislative halt brings a tentative victory for naturist rights".)*

But meanwhile, coinciding with these legislative bills, the much less understood proposed **Section 37 additions to Chapter NR 45 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code** are still in the **FINAL STAGES of approval**. These rules being promulgated by the Department of Natural Resources have similar anti-nudity language and impact any naturist use on **ALL** lands managed or controlled by the DNR. The targeted public lands include well-known clothing-optional Mazo Beach, previously used by around 70,000 visitors a year until closed by the DNR in 2016. The DNR's intention is to keep the beach closed until their proposed anti-nudity changes are approved. This move not only impacts Mazo Beach but also sets a restrictive precedent for naturist activities throughout Wisconsin.

To clarify: Chapter NR 45, Wis. Adm. Code, governs the conduct of visitors to the lands and facilities owned, leased, or controlled by the department, and SECTION 37 establishes a specific prohibition of going nude in public on department managed lands and defines nudity. The following proposed rule change (from PR-03-20) explains the intended renumbering and amending of NR 45.04 –

SECTION 37. NR 45.04 (3) (am) 1. and 2. are created to read: NR 45.04 (3) (am) Nudity.

- 1. In this section, "nude" or "nudity" means being clothed or unclothed in such a manner that the person's genitals, pubic hair, buttocks, perineum, anus, anal region, or pubic hair region of any person, or any portion of the breast at or below the upper edge of the areola thereof of any female person, is exposed to public view or is not covered by an opaque covering.
- 2. No person may appear, bathe, sunbathe, walk, or otherwise be nude on any lands under the management, supervision, or control of the department. This does not apply to breastfeeding by nursing parents and does not apply in any of the following areas not open to public view: restrooms, bath houses, showers, changing facilities, or privately-owned camping units.

After a virtual hearing and final comment period in December (a big THANK YOU to all who commented) where 26 out of 27 public comments opposed the proposed section 37 nudity ban, the DNR still proceeded with these changes. Then came committee approval, as well as approvals from the

Natural Resources Board and the Governor. The proposed rules are now being reviewed by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy and the Assembly Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The committees have various options regarding how to proceed, and the future path of the rules depends on what the committees decide.

As the landscape continues to quickly evolve, our commitment to vigilance, advocacy, and solidarity remains essential. Whether you reside in-state or out-of-state, NAC needs your assistance in trying to prevent these rules from being finalized and enacted. Please call **NAC at 920-415-2900** now to find out the best specific ways you can be part of attempting to stop this assault on naturist rights.

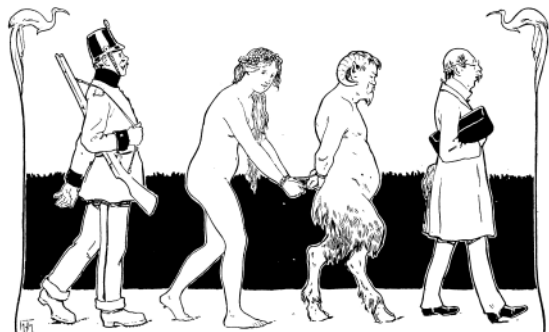
There is still much to do in a very short period of time. For instance, at present NAC is specifically requesting any Wisconsin residents living in the following districts to **contact NAC immediately at 920-415-2900**. (Senate districts 2, 16, 22, 29, & 30 and Assembly districts 3, 23, 25, 29, 34, 35, 36, 54, 57, 59, 74, 79, 80, 87, & 92).

For over 30 years, NAC has played a critical role in monitoring legislative activities and coordinating responses to threats against naturist freedoms. This is far from the first time that the DNR or other opposition has attempted to change State Statutes or Administrative Rules, be it by introducing anti-nudity bills, attempting to sneak last minute additions into the state budget, etc. We encourage all who are committed to the cause to engage with us at NAC, offer your support, and be ready to mobilize swiftly to participate in public hearings or dialogues or in other ways that could shape the future of naturism in Wisconsin.

Please stay Informed and Involved: If you have not already done so, sign up for free NAC alerts and newsletters to stay updated on this issue and be able to receive further guidance on opposing these restrictive rules.

Spread the Word: Inform other naturists and supportive communities about these developments and encourage them to take action.

Your Participation is Crucial: Your voice and action are vital in opposing these rule changes. The collective effort of the naturist community can make a significant impact in preserving our rights and freedoms. Let's continue to unite and express our opposition to these restrictive measures.



NAC and NEF Partner with Planet Nude

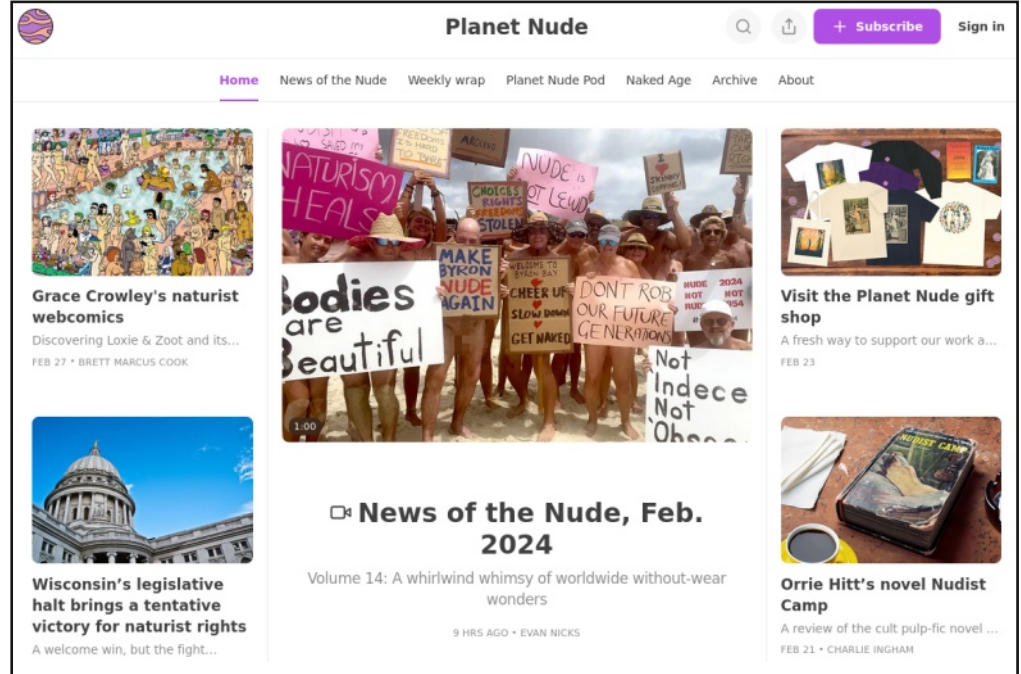
Planet Nude announced this news best. Here's the announcement, which was included in the "News of the Nude" Feb. 29th, and quoted here with permission:

"I'm thrilled to announce that Planet Nude has gained the support of two new Anchor Sponsors: The Naturist Action Committee (NAC) and The Naturist Education Foundation (NEF)."

"Since 1991, the Naturist Action Committee (NAC) has worked to advance and protect naturist rights in North America. Focused on the responsible use of public lands for nude recreation, NAC operates with a volunteer board and emphasizes community involvement to integrate naturism into society."

"The Naturist Education Foundation (NEF), first established in 1991, supports naturist initiatives and preserves its history. As a charitable organization, NEF educates the public and leaders about naturism, promoting acceptance through resources and events."

"Both organizations trace their origins to the efforts of Lee Baxandall, a key figure in the modern Free Beach Movement in America (and a personal naturist hero). Baxandall's dedication to promoting body acceptance and nude



recreation led to the establishment of these organizations as formidable forces in the fight for naturist rights and freedoms. Regular readers will hopefully have no trouble finding positive associations between the visions and values of these orgs and those that we try daily to represent here on the pages of Planet Nude."

"With Planet Nude's commitment to editorial integrity and independence, the support from NAC and NEF is a perfect fit. This partnership enhances our platform by providing our readers with expert insights from decades of advocacy and activism for nude rights. It promises to enrich our content, ensuring our reporting and analysis are more accurate, informed, and legitimate. This collaboration is a testament to our shared values and the enduring influence of champions like Baxandall. We are optimistic about the positive impact this partnership will have on our community and the naturist movement at large."

Thank You!

The Naturist Action Committee wishes to sincerely thank all of the naturists near and far who have been and continue to work together with NAC in attempting to prevent these anti-nudity bills and rules from passing. We also greatly appreciate the collaboration of various topfree and LGBTQ+ groups, Madison and Milwaukee WNBR folks, supportive businesses, legal officials, senators, representatives, and the Reddit community, whose moderators initiated a fund drive for NAC when the bills were introduced and whose members graciously supported the drive. Finally, NAC acknowledges Planet Nude's valuable support in publishing NAC Action Alerts, distributing updates, and providing accurate and timely coverage of the everchanging scenario. accurate, informed, and legitimate. This collaboration is a testament to our shared values and the enduring influence of champions like Baxandall. We are optimistic about the positive impact this partnership will have on our community and the naturist movement at large.



NEF's Other New Partnership

NEF has also partnered with another organization on a new joint opportunity, but it hasn't been formally announced. We can't spill the beans on it yet. Keep an eye on AANR's communications over the next month.

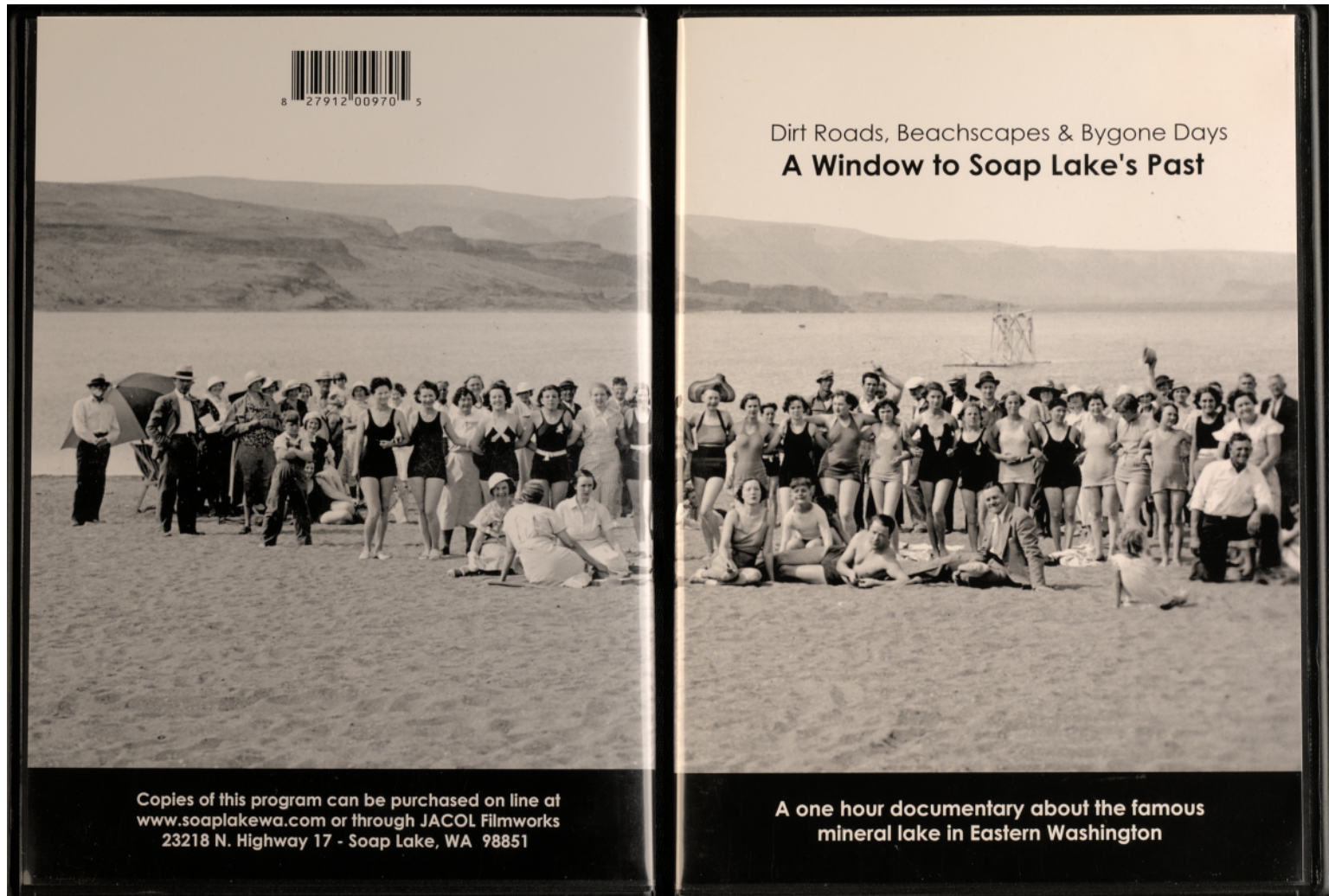
Brief Film Review:

Dirt Roads, Beachscapes and Bygone Days: A Window to Soap Lake's Past

By Dave

It's a wonderful, wistful documentary on the history of the town of Soap Lake, Washington. I found it to be engaging and terribly poignant. The only significance to nudist/naturists, however, is that a "nudist colony" was located on one side of the lake at one time. This is briefly mentioned (00:27:14 - 00:27:51) referring to an unsuccessful attempt by the town Sheriff to shut it down. Lovely though the piece is, my opinion is only the most ardent historian or filmmaker would watch the whole movie for that small a mention of nudism.

[NEF Research Library patrons may view this film by requesting Video562.] 



VHS Conversion – The Wrong Way

By Doug Hickok

What a trip this is going to be! Back in the January issue of *Pages of History*, I stupidly wrote the following: “...I’ll be starting on the VHS collection. On the plus side, VHS is pretty simple – just play it and record the output.”

Right after that, I requested advice on the topic. One helpful reader wrote with some valuable insight on the VHS conversion industry, which led me down the rabbit hole on how the professionals do this simple-sounding activity. Another friend of mine, who worked in the video broadcast industry for many years, was also a wealth of information. Savvy patrons of the library may recognize his name as the person who digitized our sole Edison record.

The Task At Hand

NEF has about 300 VHS tapes. If we hire professional services to digitize these, the standard rate for a good service is \$20 per tape. That’s \$6,000+! On top of that, nobody is local, and we would need to transport the collection in batches to facilities several hours away. (Ignoring the fact that the nearest person with a key is already a couple hours away too, turning this into an all-day adventure.)

Doing the work myself is not just cost-effective, but also reduces risk in a couple of ways. The extra travel and hand-off to other services is no longer a thing. It also reduces the risk of content issues – we never know what is *actually* on these donated tapes, and perhaps some don’t belong in the library.

The Very Wrong Way

Many of you might say, why not buy a VHS-to-DVD combo unit? I’ve seen the results of this, ripping DVD’s that have been made with these, and the quality is low. If I have a VCR, why not buy a cheap USB converter? Not only is quality lost by the VCR, but the USB devices perform very lossy compression of the video signal, and frequently skip frames.

The Increasingly Challenging Environment

As of 2016, VCRs (including any combo units) aren’t being manufactured anymore. In the 1990’s and 2000’s, everyone had a VCR in their home. That’s not the case anymore, 20 years later. Even thrift stores don’t seem to have many of them – either they broke and were thrown out, or were discarded some other way due to being obsolete. There’s a bunch of things that can fail on them. Belts will stretch out, plastic pieces (including gears) will break, the tape path will accumulate crud (especially from older tapes as they oxidize and decay), rubber wheels will harden and lose their stickiness, the fragile and tiny drum head might break, components might fry, capacitors might leak, or it might just get out of alignment. Some things, like gears and the drum head, cannot be repaired.

VCRs are not just hard to find, but they keep breaking as they age. Especially under heavy use. Combine that with ever-decaying VHS tapes – some from the 1980’s that have been aging for 40 years already – and the challenges are

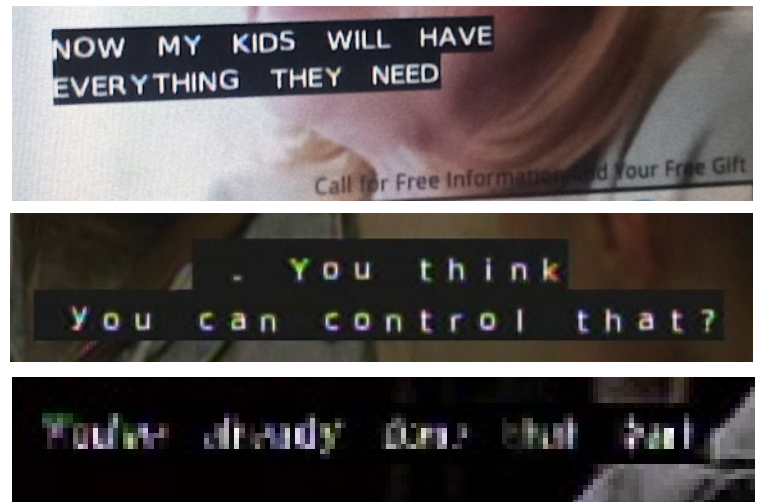
increasing every year. NOW is the time to get it done, and done right.

Faced with 300+ VHS tapes, I’ve studied how to clean, repair, and care for VCRs. Going from the advice of others, I will need to fully clean the VCR about every 10 tapes, and clean the head every couple tapes. This all assumes one VCR will last this long.

The Classic Professional Setup

Professionals declare, at a very minimum, that a basic setup costs at least \$1,000. It starts with a good VCR. Prices for refurbished working VCRs are at least \$200, but a “good” one like a JVC HR-S9600 is about \$800. If you want a truly professional and built-like-a-tank VCR, a \$1,500 Panasonic AG-7650 might be more your thing.

[Continued on next page...]



[ABOVE: TOP: A photo of the monitor, where Closed Captions are perfectly clear. MIDDLE: A higher-end USB capture device, the strange colors are lossy compression artifacts. BOTTOM: A cheap internal capture card.]

[BELOW: The two VCR units mentioned in the article.]



[Continued from previous page.]

I placed an order for a refurbished AG-7650, but soon canceled it after finding out that it cannot play SLP tapes. Many at NEFRL are listed as “personal copy” or otherwise look home recorded, so many might be SLP. I then ordered the Panasonic HR-S9600 (also freshly refurbished), but shipping the unit from the East coast to the Midwest was apparently too much stress and it arrived non-operational with a big dent in the cardboard box. I tried a few things but ultimately had to return it. Shopping local is a must with these fragile things.

The next critical component, per the professionals, is a good Time Base Corrector (TBC). They run about \$2,000. Most readers probably don’t know what these are, but they are critical in cleaning up and stabilizing the video signal. Some VCRs, like the two I mentioned above, include a very simple TBC. I never ordered a separate unit.

The last critical component is an internal capture card. Good ones run about \$600, and they seem to do a fairly good job with the analog data coming at them. I don’t have one of these either. I have a cheap (\$15) USB converter, a pretty decent (\$100) USB converter, and a \$30 internal capture card. Examples of the quality from these is in the photos.


A generally forgotten piece of the puzzle is Closed Captions. I ordered a \$30 stand-alone unit to add hard subtitles to the video. For any videos with CC, I would need to capture them twice. None of the professional services I found mention anything about preserving CC’s.



[UPS did a bang-up job!]

The Modern Method of Preservation

As of around 2019, the “Classic Professional Setup” became the old, expensive, and sub-optimal method. A vast majority of professional services still do it the old way, and quite frankly, still get satisfactory results.

But there exists a “theoretically perfect” method of digitization and preservation that only the “mad scientist” type of person can do. That’s me, a “mad scientist”. I’ll write about this amazingly innovative method, and my (so far) successful implementation of it, in a future newsletter. 

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Newsletters provide you with original content about:

- ▶ the activist efforts of the Naturist Action Committee,
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- ▶ the preservation of naturist history by the NEF Research Library.

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