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

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Some of the places NAC & NEF be this summer:

Moongroove Festival

GNI Gathering

TNSF Central Gathering

TNSF Western Gathering

AANR Midwest Convention

AANR Summer Convention



NEF Supports Skinny Dip Day with \$1,000 Grant

Although Nude Recreation Week has been recognized for decades, Skinny Dip Day has been keeping Lee Baxandall's idea alive since 2019. The event markets to the public through press coverage and social media coverage, and encourages everyone to give it a try.

Participants gain experience in body positivity with this fun and rewarding activity. As Baxandall often said, "body acceptance is the idea, nude recreation is the way."

The goal of this NEF grant is two-fold. First, it'll encourage more sites to host skinny-dipping events. And second, it'll provide rewards for the best hosts to encourage even bigger and better events. By growing this event overall, it supports NEF's mission to promote naturism to a larger public audience.

For more information, or to get involved, see skinnydipday.org.



**SKINNY
DIP DAY**
JULY 12, 2025

Education Foundations - Nude Figure Drawing Competition and 2025 Scholarship Award

by Al Gilewicz

The collaboration between the AANR Education Foundation (EF) and the Naturist Education Foundation (NEF) achieved another milestone to mainstream the benefits of non-sexual social nudism and support education and the arts.

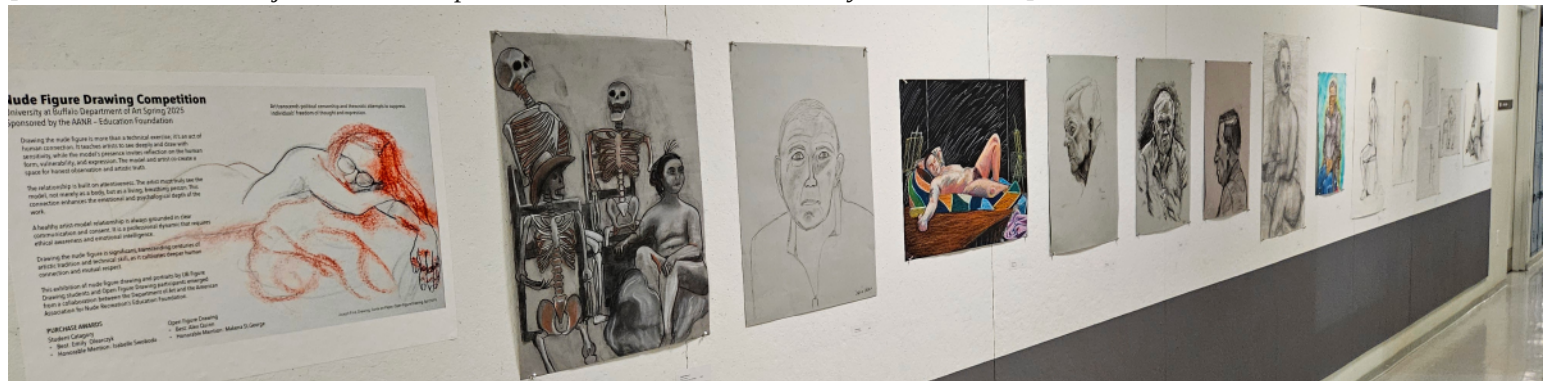
On May 15, 2025 the EF hosted an awards reception for the first annual Nude Figure Drawing Art competition at the University of Buffalo. Many of the models came from the local Niagara Naturist club that are reflected in the drawings created by undergraduate and graduate students as well as figure drawing classes open to the public.

A pleasant surprise, the anonymous juror honorable mention award for the Open Figure Drawing competition was given to Makena St. George. Coupled with this honorable mention, she was also presented with formal acknowledgment of the 2025 AANR-EF and NEF Joint Scholarship having a value of \$2,000.

Discussions with the over 40 people who attended the reception facilitated conversations that de-stigmatized the concept of non-sexual social nudism and how integrated nudism is to health, body positivity, education and the arts. All it takes is the courage to initiate discussions and open a dialog.



[Above: The EF/NEF joint scholarship award. Below: The entranceway to the exhibit.]



City Retreat History



[NEF board of Directors Jim Dickey (left) and Brad McDonald (right), accept the donation of the archives of City Retreat / Gulf Coast Naturist Club from Kathy and Bob Amdor of City Retreat in Hudson FL on Feb 23, 2025.]

On February 22-23, City Retreat in Hudson, Florida held a two-day "History Fest" to give residents a chance to look at the nearly 67 year history of the residential development and Nudist Club that has been known by many names including City Retreat, Navajo Lodge, Gulf Coast Naturist Park and Eden RV Park. The event also featured a book release of "Nude County USA, the history of naturism in Pasco County, Florida" by Olaf Danielson (pen name of NEF board member Brad McDonald) and Lee St. Mary, who signed books and told stories to local members.

When Brad (Olaf) was there last fall researching in the City Retreat archives, he helped convince City Retreat Homeowner's Association Historian Bob Amdor to donate the hoard of records, stock certificates, newsletters, films, and lots of photos for archiving. A small amount was transported back to the NEF Research Library in Oshkosh by Jim, and the bulk was delivered to the American Nudist Research Library at Cypress Cove by Brad.



The First Publicly Sanctioned Nude Recreation in the United States was in...

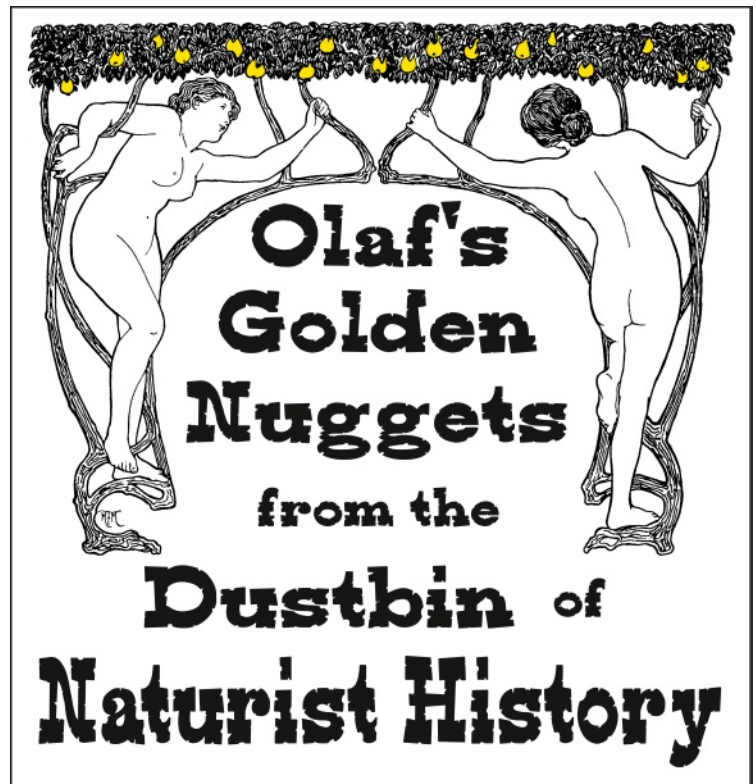
St. Petersburg, Florida

by Olaf Danielson

When did nude recreation start in America? Who were the founders? As Tampa Bay Free Beaches tries to finalize establishing a nude beach at Ft. DeSoto near St. Petersburg in Pinellas County, one should remember that St. Petersburg was not always against nude activities. In fact, it was the initial public promotor of nude use to bolster its tourism appeal. Although never truly considered part of the early nudist movement, the first public nude recreational facility in North America was Solarium in St. Petersburg, Florida. It was started by E. J. Melville. Both the location and the person are rarely mentioned by nudist historians.

The concept of open-air nude sunbathing was "researched" and legitimized by a St. Pete physician named E.J. Melville in 1922. He wrote an essay entitled "The Curative Value of Florida Sunshine" which was published in the International Journal of Surgery. He called it Heliotherapy. It was inexpensive and simple to do. All that was required was for the patient to spend most of the day lying naked in the sun with their eyes shaded from the sun's glare, and the vitamin D would cure a lot of illness. Florida sunshine was considered the best, of course. Not too long afterwards, newspapers picked up on this article and republished it.

After St. Petersburg built the "Million Dollar Pier" in 1926 and developed Spa Beach in 1928 they began to build a



\$1,400 walled Solarium spearheaded by a local man, Henry Landsman, who came to Florida to heal his rheumatism.

The response to the nude solarium was overwhelming, and it was almost instantly overcrowded. As a result, Henry Landsman helped form the Solarium Society. After petitioning the city and after a nationwide check for marketability, the city spent \$11,500 and started building the huge Temple of the Sun complex in December 1929. On February 4, 1930, in front of 30,000 spectators, the city opened the Egyptian-themed Solarium where separate men's and women's courtyards were available and had room for 500 patrons. It was dedicated to the Egyptian Sun God "Ra" and was decorated with birds and sun motifs. When opened, it was considered the largest and best equipped open-air sunbathing facility in North America. It

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[The entrance of the initial solarium on Spa Beach in 1929. This one only had 24 x 40 feet of space inside. From the National Geography archives, public domain.]



[The new "Temple of the Sun" entrance 1931, from St. Petersburg Historical Society, public domain.]

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always seems a bit odd to have built something openly so un-Christian in an era when the conservative Protestant right had openly forced Prohibition on America while the soldiers were gone fighting the First World War.

There was no dress code for the structure. Neither Landsman, the Solarium Society, nor manager E. H. McCrahon gave "too hoots" about what, if anything, was worn inside. Eventually, it was just marketed as being nude on the signage and most everyone gladly stripped off for a "full body tan." The initial daily entrance fee was \$0.35 including a towel, soap, and the use of a chair.

Naked guests could play cards, volleyball, horseshoes, and could even order drinks and dinner from the spa next door which would be delivered. Between 1933 and 1935, it served over 350,000 patrons and more than paid for its operations with over 300 patrons a day. The twin 724-foot by 248-foot sections were separated by a wooden fence. The floor was bare white sand. The sections were segregated, but sometimes a wall fell down, or more adventurous people climbed the fences. Even when planes would be flying overhead most did not seem to care. Some stood naked waiving at the fly-bys. The only issue seemed to be allowing the Solarium Society to enter floats in parades.



In fact, the "Temple to the Sun" at the Solarium was as much of a religious and health club as it was anything. It was a place for tourism. It was also owned by the city and became a way to mass market for tourists to come and visit the area.

Not just satisfied with that, St. Petersburg made these all over the county. One was even built using wooden walls on Boca Ciega Island in 1929. Hotels such as the Renaissance Vinoy Resort, for one, also jumped on the concept, offering similar rooftop retreats and actively marketed naked sunbathing

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[Above: Men's section, taken in 1929, from Jan Gay's "among the nudists".


Top: Part of the women's section, from the St Petersburg Historical society.]

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for those suffering from the many ills that only tanning could cure. These were extremely popular, and St. Petersburg's tourism soared during the Depression. A few solariums even opened in Tampa. When Sally Rand visited the "Temple" in 1938, disrobed on the street and walked into the Temple of the Sun naked as a publicity stunt, a regular to the Solarium was interviewed and stated that she was unimpressed by Rand. "We have beautiful naked women walking around here all the time. She is nothing special."

Interestingly, solariums as well as nudist clubs, and even skinny-dipping became illegal next door in Hillsborough County in June 1939. The only nudism location in the county, Mossy Oaks, the winter home of New Jersey's Rock Lodge, had seen the writing on the wall and had left the county in May to restart just north of the county line at Lake Como the following winter. It would be an arrested devotee of a solarium in the Temple Terrace neighborhood of Tampa that would end up being the test case to challenge the new law which was later declared unconstitutional. However, damage done, no nudist, naturist, or solarium would ever appear again within Hillsborough County.

Many would now be surprised that for at least two decades, the number one tourist industry in St. Petersburg was nude sunbathing, just unfortunately it did not involve swimming. Despite its Mediterranean architecture and progressive attitudes, most say St Petersburg peaked in 1928,

and except for a little resurgence in the late thirties, the city stagnated. Whereas the war benefitted Tampa, St. Petersburg started to become run-down after the war, stopped spending money on promotions, and let their infrastructure and the "Temple of the Sun" deteriorate. Aging of the initial solarium aficionados and a nationwide fascination with a movie "Garden of Eden" led to the decline of Pinellas County solariums. Landsman died in 1957, and amid continuing controversy in the mid-fifties about nudity -- even segregated nudity -- attendance waned. Despite dropping the fees to \$0.25, the facility closed in 1961, ending a 33-year run. It was razed the next year. 



[St. Petersburg Historical Society, public domain.]

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- ▶ the preservation of naturist history by the NEF Research Library.

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