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The History of The Nourist Society

Mark Storey

What is The Nourist Society? How, why, and where did it begin? What does it hope to accomplish? And why is it headquartered, of all places, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin?

This outline history of TNS hopes to answer the above and other commonly posed questions about the premier advocacy group for family-friendly nude recreation on North American public lands. This account is intended for those naturists and nudists who wish to know more about their ideological roots, for those in media who need to follow up on a story about skinny-dipping at a local beach, and for students of American history looking for a summary of one strand of advocacy for rational acceptance of social nudity. It's even for those who are not at all happy that so many people delight in total body freedom.

Defining Those Labels— Naturism & Nudism

Perhaps for those new to social nudity, we can begin with a brief understanding of the terms “naturism” and “nudism.” Both refer to the belief that non-sexualized, family-friendly social nudity is a good thing. The sense of “good” may differ, depending on the individual using the term. Some will talk about the benefits to physical health. Others will praise the feelings of freedom and relaxation that come from being nude outdoors. Others say they receive a spiritual benefit from being naked in the midst of nature. Some claim they derive psychological or social benefits from full body acceptance.

The people who founded and presently make up The Nourist Society (TNS)

often choose to describe themselves as “naturists” instead of “nudists” for a variety of reasons. Europeans who practice social nudity have historically referred to their set of beliefs and practices as “naturism,” and the word connotes a connectedness with nature TNS seeks to foster.

In America, from early in the twentieth century until the formation of TNS in 1980, groups of people who banded together in one form or another to recreate nude generally called themselves “nudists.” Often, these nudists would be members of a formal organization that functioned rather like a rustic country club. Many of these clubs still exist today; others have developed into upscale resorts.

Naturists, to the degree they think about it at all, often distinguish themselves from nudists by stressing the value and joy of social nudity in as many aspects of their

lives as possible. Their social nudity reaches beyond securely walled club grounds and their own homes. In 1997, TNS defined naturism as “A way of living in greater fidelity to nature, with a norm of full nudity in social life, the genitals included, when possible and appropriate. We aim to enhance acceptance and respect for one’s self, other persons, and the biosphere.”

In line with TNS’ definition is that of the International Naturist Federation: “Naturism is a way of life in harmony with nature characterized by the practice of communal nudity, with the intention of encouraging self-respect, respect for others, and for the environment.”

Without claiming to settle the issue of how best to use the terms “naturism” and “nudism,” for the purposes of this history “nudism” will refer to the practice of being nude in a pleasant, non-erotic, mixed-gender setting.

“Naturism” will refer to the practice of nudism along with a considered respect and acceptance for the integrity of one’s whole person, other persons, and the environment.

TNS Pre-History: Lee Baxandall

A history of TNS could not be set forth without discussion of its founder, Lee Baxandall. Born on January 26, 1935 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Baxandall’s first skinny-dipping experiences were as a young Boy Scout camping in Twin Lakes Reservation in Wisconsin. Lee loved scouting, and remained proud of earning the rank of Eagle Scout, and in so doing,

being selected in 1951 to accompany a 12-member delegation of scouts to meet President Harry S. Truman at the White House.

After receiving a master’s degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1958, Baxandall moved to New York, where he became active throughout the 1960s writing, translating, and critiquing plays in periodicals such as *The Drama*

Lee probably never had any idea just how many people’s lives he touched - folks who never knew him. His recognition and incorporation as a Massage SIG of the late David Linton’s “Stroking Community Network” led to an acceptance of sensual non-sexual holistic nude touch `way ahead of his time. Lee and I even got to laugh at the irony of “body (non)acceptance” as his body shook with tremors on my massage table at Eastover one year - our days of running in the sun on Cape Cod long over, we could nonetheless still appreciate how far his Naturist journey had taken each of us into healthier attitudes and ways of being. Phinny had it right - I’ll be among the many who’ll miss Lee’s presence.

Laurene Bradford

Review, Partisan Review, The Village Voice, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, and Science and Society. He also applied his writing skills to producing books on art, psychology, and politics.¹ His political activism at this time prepared him for his interest in naturism to come.

Baxandall not only wrote about art, but supported, collected, and preserved it. He has been most proud, perhaps, of his promotion of the long-ignored works of Robert Koehler, a 19th Century German-American artist who’s most significant painting, *The Strike*, Baxandall found stored and unrecognized in a museum. *The Strike* depicts a unique moment in the history of the labor movement in Wisconsin, a moment that resonated with Baxandall’s emerging sense of justice for naturists. This

masterpiece now hangs in the Zeughaus Museum in Berlin, Germany.

His first experience with free beach naturism was in 1968, when he and his wife at that time first visited Truro Beach on Cape Cod. “To our surprise,” Baxandall says, “we found people doing what I had done at scout camp. We found that they were the nicest people we’d met on the Cape. We brought our child along, and other people brought their children. It was a family thing. It was no obsessive thing—it was just the pleasant way of being on the beach.”

Although Baxandall lived in New York, beginning in 1970 when his father passed away, Lee usually spent one week a month traveling back to his hometown of Oshkosh, to help run the family business: The Baxandall Company. This business produced flyers, pamphlets, videos, and other educational materials for trade schools and businesses. It was in part a publishing firm. Baxandall made his living,

then, running his father’s business and, to a lesser degree, from his writing in New York. He supported himself during his years with TNS through this non-naturist business. His work in naturism was primarily a labor of love.

One of Baxandall’s Wisconsin-based projects was publishing and editing the *Green Mountain Quarterly*. Its purpose, as its masthead declared, was “to present outstanding analyses on issues of social urgency.” Topics addressed pertained to the environment, social justice, and politics. The fourth edition—the famous “Skinny Dipper Issue” of August 1976—gave free beach advocates a clear, professional-sounding voice in articulating the issues that would attract Baxandall the rest of his life.

Lee Baxandall: The Man and his Legacy

The passing of Lee Baxandall was a loss to me personally as well as a loss to the Naturist Community. I first met Lee during the 1980s at a Mid-winter Naturist Gathering. My wife Shirley and I were new to the nudist/Naturist experience at that time.

We were trying to find our way in this new choice of recreation. Having both skinny-dipped in our youth, she in Duluth, MN and me in Boston, MA. We were not ashamed of the choice. We had by this time joined South Florida Free Beaches, attended several private home events, and visited a few nudist parks and resorts.

We were accidental Naturists having joined the movement due to my psoriasis, for which the doctor prescribed natural sunlight.

However, nude sunbathing on public land presented a whole new bunch of questions and issues. Was it legal? Was it a Constitutional Right? Was it a civil faux pas or a criminal law violation? I was at the time a national director of marketing for a Fortune 200 company and an arrest would result in my losing my job. And, the possible loss of a college scholarship for our daughter.

Discussions with Lee at the Mid-winter Gathering were informational. Lee followed up my questions by sending me past articles from TNS' *Clothed with the Sun* and *Nude & Natural* magazines. Lee also referred me to Naturists that were learned in different segments of the American culture and its relationship to Naturism.

During this time I learned of Lee's forward thinking when he informed me that the TNS magazines were intended to be the recorded history of the Naturist Free Beach movement in North America.

Followed were dozens of phone calls, meetings at gatherings and advise and constant conversations with Lee. Direction, encouragement and motivation always laced into his wordsmithing. My writings he gently edited and offered grammar lessons. I soon realized that I was associated with a compassionate genius. An American Leader.

Researching the Naturist Society at the time, I soon learned that Lee was the founder. More than that, he was its moral leader. Lee, for the society, had established ethics. A code. That code is incorporated into the document, Beach Etiquette. Simple, and yet powerful.

Lee's clear mission statement on what American Naturism was and wasn't. Policy! No discrimination, period. Nude recreation! No sexual activity. Pure. No compromise, no nonsense.

Lee invested his time, his education, his family name and his wealth, unselfishly, to establish The Naturist Society as the focal point for American Naturists. He contacted, on a national basis, what were known as Free Beach groups and brought them under the umbrella of The Naturist Society using the society's magazine as the communication vehicle for a national network. All agreeing to TNS' policies.

Lee also financed a few individuals to go out into the country and find and share the word that TNS was there to help. Get organized was the goal.

Looking back, the history is remarkable, substantial and successful.

Lee's Naturist Society is responsible for the forming of an organization named South Florida Free Beaches in 1980. SFFB then, in 1991 founded the designated Naturist beach at Haulover Beach Park, on the Gold Coast of South Florida at Haulover Beach Park. Lee Baxandall, by founding The Naturist Society, encouraging the organization of South Florida Free Beaches had, indirectly, showed the way for the leaders of SFFB to establish Haulover's designated Naturist Free Beach.

It was Lee's and The Naturist Society's Beach Etiquette that convinced local officials that Naturists were serious about appropriate behavior and mentoring their own beach section

During the 1980s, Lee Baxandall was at the forefront, sounding the alarm, to alert Naturists that the newly forming Christian religious right organizations were going to target nudists and Naturists as part of their strategy

to attack the nude nightclubs and the non-related pornography industries.

The promotion of anti-nudity legislation, nationally, soon followed and has consumed the time and money of the Naturist movement ever since.

Lee has left us too soon. His passing, one would hope, would re-energize Naturists and would inspire new Naturist beach users to get involved in representing our Naturists issues and protecting our existing beach locations. We need to enter our beaches, justified.

Lee's death led to me searching for a poem that would express his passing with words that only another wordsmith could write. I found those words in a poem by Stephen Spender (1930), "I Think Continually of Those Who Were Truly Great"

"I think continually of those who were truly great.

Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history

Through corridors of light where the hours are suns,

Endless singing. Whose lovely ambition Was that their lips, still touched with fire,

Should tell of the spirit clothed from head to toe in song....

...Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields....

...The names of those who in lives fought for life,

Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre,

Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun,

And left the vivid air signed with their honour."

Lee, we are all stronger for knowing you. You will be missed. Thanks, for the memories.

Writer's note: Lee believed that the word Naturist should be capitalized for the purpose of giving Naturism standing. I agree and did that here.... Richard

Richard Mason,
South Florida Free Beaches

The “Free the Free Beach Committee” is Formed in 1975

In the summer of 1974, Lawrence Hadley, superintendent of the Cape Cod National Seashore, had proposed a ban on nudity to include the traditionally clothing-optional Truro beaches on the Atlantic

Lee was a very special person to me, not only for being a visionary leader of the free beach movement, but also for the little things he did. When I was President of South Florida Free Beaches, Lee would always find time to send notes of encouragement, which always meant so much.

—Bruce Frendahl
South Florida Free Beaches

side of Cape Cod. Hadley argued that the nude use was attracting too large a crowd for the site.

Baxandall and some other free beach enthusiasts developed a support group—the Free the Free Beach Committee—to protest the ban. Since he was the only member of the group who was self-employed, and thus had job security, the task fell

to him to be the public spokesperson for the group. With his ties in publishing in Oshkosh, he was also the obvious choice to direct any activist writing projects that came up.

On August 23, 1975, the Free the Free Beach Committee organized a nude beach “celebration” (the National Park Service would not allow a “demonstration”) that drew thousands of law-abiding free beach supporters. The police cited no one for nudity, and the event was deemed a success, as it drew attention to the strong public support for maintaining Truro’s unofficial clothing-optional status.

Meanwhile, on the West Coast, Eugene Callen, founder of the free beach support group Beachfront U.S.A.,² took notice of the success of the Truro beach celebration, and called Baxandall to congratulate him on a job well done. The two men decided to meet to discuss combining the efforts of East and West coast nude beach activists.

National Nude Weekend & Nude Recreation Week

In May 1976, Baxandall met with Beachfront USA in Los Angeles to discuss ways of combining their efforts and to further advance the free beach movement.

They agreed to designate August 7, 1976 as National Nude Beach Day. The West Coast group developed its own preparations to attract media attention for the event.

The weather had turned cold and stormy at the Head Of The Meadow Beach on Cape Cod, where the Free the Free Beach Committee had planned its second “celebration.” But an alternate “rain day” had been pre-announced, and the Cape Cod event took place on a cloudy but warm August 14.

Eugene Callen (d. 1978) and Lee Baxandall agreed that a continuation of these beach events should take place nationwide. Both realized that to make steady inroads on the American public’s view of beach nudity, public relations and the media must be used to good effect. To that end, the two men developed the idea for a National Nude Weekend to be held each year in July by all interested groups.³

Initially word about National Nude Weekend was spread through independent youth publications. In the 1970s, these periodicals were common, and if they received a press release telling about a large, public nude event, they were sure to print it. By the 1980s, such publications were less common, and news of the Weekend had to be issued through mainstream news agencies like the AP and UPI. This still worked, but now the news was transmitted by the press as titillating reading for a more conservative readership.

By the time The Naturist Society was established in 1980 it was the *de facto* organizer and primary promoter of this annual event. In 1992, TNS oversaw the expansion of the Weekend into a seven day Nude Recreation Week.

Other major naturist and nudist organizations in the 1990s and since have benefited by taking part in this public calendar acceptance of social nudity. Each July, TNS and other naturist organizations receive hundreds of phone calls from inquisitive media representatives trying to figure out what is going on. It gives TNS the chance to explain the principles of naturism, and to alert members of the public to the clothing-optional opportunities in their regions.

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The Free Beaches Documentation Center

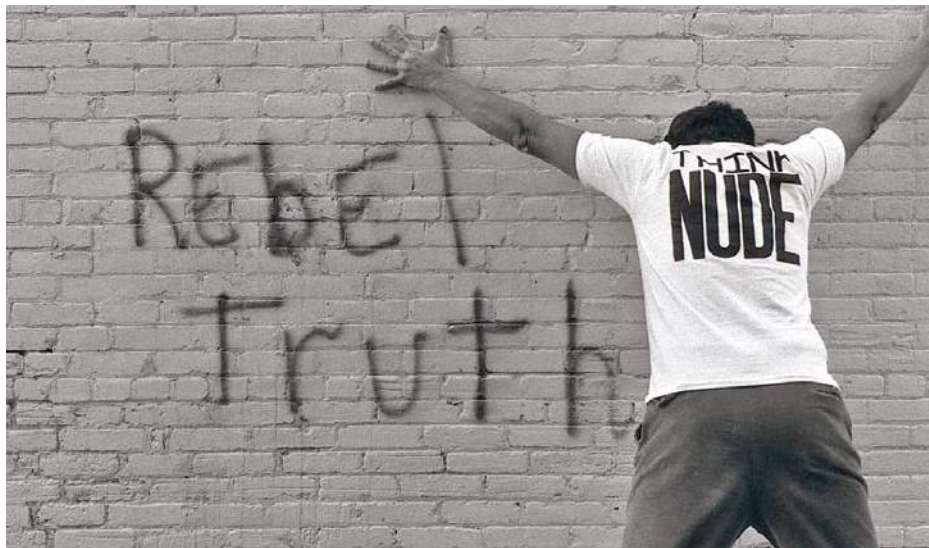
In addition to establishing National Nude Weekend, Baxandall and Callen agreed that a center to store the primary materials of the clothing-optional movement was needed. Baxandall volunteered to use his Oshkosh facilities to house these documents and to have Oshkosh be the physical location for a new Free Beaches Documentation Center.

Initially, the FBDC concentrated on collecting information pertaining to nude swimming areas (i.e., free beaches), but soon expanded to concern itself with all elements of clothing-free use of public lands. It intended to preserve documents such as posters, flyers, manifestos, news items, photographs, legal documents, and publicity paraphernalia for use by students and writers with serious interest.

The FBDC quickly expanded its original goals to include publishing and distributing a newspaper. In June 1976 the first issue of *Free Beaches* was distributed. Copies were available for the price of a donation to the FBDC. Subsequent issues, produced once a year through 1980 and undergoing name changes, were titled *Free Beaches Sun* and finally *Sun*.

The tabloid provided updates on where readers could recreate nude, and it kept them abreast of challenges to their naturist freedoms. *Sun* included short articles describing the pleasure of social nudity, offered informal surveys about social attitudes about the body, and alerted readers to special events that naturists would likely be interested in.

In October 1979, the FBDC organized a workshop for the annual convention of the National Recreation and Parks Association held in New Orleans.⁴ This was the first time a naturist or nudist group had participated in this national event. About 150 alert middle and top-level park managers attended the workshop. Baxandall and Jan Smith opened with a 23-minute, professionally produced slide and audio show titled “Nude Recreation In



LEE ALWAYS LOVED a t-shirt with a message.

America.” After the slide show Baxandall successfully debated Lawrence Hadley (now retired from Cape Cod) and two other park director panelists on the merits of nude use of Truro beach.

In March 1981, Baxandall, Durand Steiger, and Jake Satin Jacobs offered a similar workshop at the regional California and Pacific Northwest Recreation and Park Conference held in San Diego, California. John Fitz-Gerald gave yet a third workshop on October 5, 1983 at the National Recreation and Park Association’s annual convention. After 1985, the American Sunbathing Association (now the American Association for Nude Recreation) would sanction an interest in nude recreation on public lands and has participated in similar conventions ever since.

1980-1981: A “Naturist Society” is formed, Naturist Gatherings are organized, and the first edition of the *World Guide To Nude Beaches & Recreation* is sold

By the end of the 1970s, Lee Baxandall and other free beach leaders on both the East and the West coasts saw the need

for a broader-ranging, centralized naturist organization. The American Sunbathing Association was serving the needs of nudist clubs that owned property, but did virtually nothing for nude use on public lands. Defenders and promoters of clothing-optional beaches, hot springs, or naturism in general were isolated at best, and in many regions non-existent.

Baxandall called for an organizing conference to be held in San Francisco in May, 1980. Most beach leaders, coming from both sides of the nation, met to agree on how to proceed effectively and efficiently to promote and defend clothes-free use of beaches.

Attendees agreed at that meeting that the unifying organization’s business office should be called The Naturists, Inc. and that the organizational membership should be called The Naturist Society. Art Andreatte from Santa Barbara is credited with suggesting the European terms “naturists” and “naturism” to describe the group and its philosophy.

“The Naturists” and “The Naturist Society” were often used interchangeably in the early years. The former word would also denote, from 1982, the business that produced the magazines, books, and other paraphernalia of outreach. In that year, at the suggestion of TNS’ attorney, The

Naturists, Inc was officially incorporated. Most people today informally use “The Naturist Society” to refer to all aspects of the organization.

The year 1980 was pivotal for naturism in America. TNS was proposed and established, as a unifying organization to promote and defend nude recreation on appropriate public and private lands; membership in TNS was first solicited (in July and August); TNS held its first “Gathering” of nudist leaders and TNS members; and Baxandall completed the first edition of the *World Guide To Nude Beaches and Recreation*.⁵

Bonnie Ziegenhagen (now Bonnie Case) recalls the hectic early days of FBDC and then TNS. She was the first employee of the FBDC, hired in June 1976, shortly after the first edition of the *Free Beaches Sun* was published and distributed. Working four days a week for FBDC, and part-time in the mail room of the Baxandall Company next door, Ziegenhagen did the typing, labeling, and distribution of the FBDC merchandise (T-shirts, books, bumper stickers, buttons, copies of the *Sun*), editions of the *Green Mountain Quarterly*, postcards and art prints, and general office administration.

In the beginning months of its existence, TNS used what was to be the

last issue of FBDC’s *Sun* and the West Coast nudist club and free beach monthly newspaper *Bare In Mind* to announce the opportunity for membership in the new organization. By the time TNS issued its first set of membership cards in September 1980 it had 879 paying members, as well as dozens of contributors.

Jan Smith designed the TNS membership number system, and she has the first number, Baxandall the second, and Case

as “Gatherings.” TNS’ first Gathering was held on October 24-26, 1980 at Elysium in Topanga Canyon, California.⁶ TNS accepted club owner Ed Lange’s gracious invitation to use his club grounds to host this convention of free beach, hot spring, and nudist club leaders, as well as any TNS member who cared to join the discussions.

Lange, who played a prominent role in raising the level of competitive volleyball

among naturists, was a renowned photographer and publisher of nudist photography and had developed Elysium into a facility highly regarded for its alternative approaches to body acceptance and clothes-free living.

The October 1980 Naturist Gathering ushered in a fresher and more dynamic form of nudist activism.

Foregoing any strict order of parliamentary procedure, the dozens of attendees, comprising a “Who’s Who” list of cutting edge nude activists, threw themselves into the task of setting the tone for TNS and nudism for years to come.

Representatives from free beaches and landed clubs all over the country expressed their hopes and apprehensions regarding the advancement and defense of nudism. Jim Hadley and Hap Hathaway (leaders from the Western Sunbathing Association and the ASA) conferred with TNS to lay out strategies for working together for common purposes. Members offered analysis of specific legislative problems found at the state and county levels. Irene Shannon addressed the isolationist philosophy of landed clubs and the irrational fear many nudist club leaders had of being inundated by unknown miscreants from free beaches. Baxandall, Bob Page, Jim Williams, and others made suggestions

Lucile Hansen said “Naturism is nudism with a social conscious.” Lee Baxandall moved U.S. nudism from merely a casual naked experience, to a civic movement raising awareness and changing laws and policies for the benefit of the public through understanding the body and expanding freedom of expression. We are greatly indebted.

Naturally,
Carl and Vicki Hild

the third. Smith was also instrumental in compiling the site information for the first edition of the *World Guide to Nude Beaches and Recreation* (in the 1995 edition TNS changed “Recreation” to “Resorts”). With all of the information coming into the FBDC and now to TNS, Baxandall and Smith were able to update their extensive lists and descriptions of the world’s clothing-optional areas.

They wanted the *World Guide* to be accurate, complete, and up-to-date. They also wanted the book’s physical presentation to include beautiful photography and a sturdy binding. Its coverage of North American clothes-free opportunities was unmatched by any other printed guide of the time. It covers more clothing-optional clubs, resorts, beaches and hot springs than any other American publication.

One of the central features of TNS from its first year in existence was its member-driven regional meetings, known

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In 1973, I answered an advertisement in *The Village Voice* in which Lee Baxandall asked people who were interested in the Free Beach Movement to get in touch with him; I was, so I did. To me, nakedness was (and is) an ambivalent aspect of prayer, sport, combat and art. It is an offering which each of us has an obligation to use for good. We agreed that it is art in which nakedness is most fully acceptable to society; so he welcomed me to be part of the association, primarily through doing and writing about art and related matters. This is the chief work I have done ever since; I am very grateful to Lee, and wish him a happy eternal life.

Hugh Kilmer

Perhaps this Thanksgiving day was a blessing for him—finally free from a body that was no longer his friend. As you know, we go back a long way. Lee has shaped my life's mission and I still do it gladly. Throughout the years, he has been my mentor, friend, and often my harshest critic.

He was a fine leader, idealist, and man of action. He will long be remembered.

All the best,
Bern



LeeBee and I go way back, nearly 33 years, actually, to when he flew into L.A. to address a BFUSA meeting. While we've had our differences concerning the path American nudism ought to be taking, they were minor, and we always enjoyed a respectful and amiable personal relationship. As an octogenarian, I'm getting used to seeing old comrades slip away, but that doesn't make the losses any easier. Ave atque vale, Lee, you were a dynamic force for progress in our activist world.

Cec Cinder

Lee possessed a courage unlike any others—he would take on park and public officials to champion his core belief—that people are fine and noble just as they are, naked as when born. His enduring legacy is that many others now carry on his lifetime goal of body acceptance.

Frederick Gerty





Lee and Jan Smith.

on how best to respond to anti-nudity legislative pressure.

Perhaps most telling was the attendees' desire to define themselves as distinct from the club nudists of the past. Naturists, as Ron McDonald would emphasize at the meeting, do not limit their social nudity

The best tribute any Naturist could give Lee Baxandall would be to think: "What would Lee do?" and then act accordingly. With his considerable theatrical background, Lee knowingly brought the Opera/Musical Theatre SIG to the ENG every year he could, overcoming any obstacles, amicably solving any problems. That's what Lee did.

Leonard J. Lehrman
Founder/Director, The Opera/
Musical Theatre Special Interest
Group of
The Naturist Society

to their homes or the perceived security of club walls. True naturists embrace body freedom throughout their lives and do so

openly and without shame. There may be constraints laid upon them by society, but whenever possible (and not just at a club on a weekend) they enjoy the body freedom nature intended.

Attendees of that first Gathering may recall discussions about the contemporary culture of nudist clubs. For example, one topic was the nude beauty pageants popular with many nudist clubs at that time. Such events were thought by many naturists to objectify women as sexual objects for the delight of males, fixating too heavily on the sexual connotations of nudity. This grated against the TNS members' sense of gender equality. It would be better, the group thought, to develop ways to express and take joy in human beauty without demeaning and objectifying women.

Another innovation announced at the first Gathering was the formulation of Naturist Special Interest Groups, or SIGs.⁷ Baxandall got the idea of SIGs from the Mensa group. The idea was to provide a common meeting point on topics and activities of interest to TNS members. Each SIG would encourage active participation in social interaction and communication. The result would be a more dynamic and socially cohesive group of people who had a love for social nudity and body acceptance as common denominators.

SIGs did not have to relate directly to nudity. Early SIGs addressed topics as

varied as fitness, photography, parenting, sex equality, gay awareness, and spirituality. Presently TNS SIGs include groups interested in poetry, opera, massage, scuba, and Christianity. Some are quite active and participate at Gatherings; others simply have a newsletter to let others with similar interests know what their peers are doing. Today Network coordinator Debbie Jungwirth assists TNS members in the easy process of developing and maintaining a SIG.

In 1981, TNS held its first Eastern Naturist Gathering at Pine Tree Association in Maryland, one of the East Coast's oldest and best-established nudist clubs. Every year since then, TNS has had at least one Gathering on both the East and the West coasts. In the 1990s, the calendar was expanded to include Gatherings in almost every region of the U.S., including Florida, Washington, Texas, Michigan, and Massachusetts.

In addition to the two or three gatherings organized directly by the TNS staff, regional naturist groups have taken on the organization of similarly formatted naturist festivals. For example, Morley Schloss of Florida's Sunsport Gardens plans



an annual Northeast Nudist Festival at Empire Haven Nudist Park in New York State, and TNS-member Mark Storey has run Northwest Nudist Festivals at Lake Associates Recreation Club in Washington and Sun Meadow Resort in Idaho.

The gatherings and festivals bring together nudists from around the country for educational seminars, legislative updates, sports and games, and the chance to meet, support and learn from one another. Some events have as few as 50 attendees; others have attracted nearly 800. Each is successful due to the volunteer efforts of TNS members. It is the membership who decides what kind of events to have, and it is the members who host the majority of the seminars, workshops, displays, performances, and demonstrations. It's at the gatherings and festivals that the grassroots volunteer spirit of TNS members is most clearly manifested. It is to TNS' satisfaction that other nudist and nudist organizations have recently imitated the style and format of these events.

A New Era for TNS Publications: *Clothed with the Sun*

After Baxandall and others at the 1980 San Francisco conference established The Nudist Society, Baxandall and Jan Smith decided that it was time to move the *Sun* tabloid to the next level of production. Using the *Green Mountain Quarterly's* format as a guide, Baxandall and Smith spent that latter part of 1980 and the beginning of 1981 producing the first issue of *Clothed with the Sun*.⁸

Baxandall described the quarterly magazine's purpose in the premier issue of *CWS*. He took the journal's name from the utopian Home Colony of Tacoma, Washington. Home existed as an alternative living arrangement (local opponents labeled them "anarchists") from 1896 to 1914. They advocated liberal views on marriage and the benefits of mixed-sex bathing and skinny-dipping. Their journal was called *Clothed with the Sun*, and seemed to Baxandall to speak to the issues of body

acceptance and social nudity important to nudists.

"As a first time nudist and photographer, Lee welcomed me and paid me the best compliment. A full color insert of my photos of the old Avalon. Thank you Lee, rest in peace."

Victor Blandburg

Of additional interest to Baxandall was the subtle reminder inherent to the title that grassroots, communal, and publicly articulated nudism was alive and well in America long before the German influence in the 1920s and 1930s which led to the corporate nudism of the American Sunbathing Association.

Some readers of the *Sun* tabloids had complained about the low newspaper quality of that publication's materials, so Baxandall chose a more resilient and archival quality for *CWS*. Also, TNS wanted to present the growing trend of clothing-optional beach use to recreation managers and law enforcement officials as being led by people who were organized, well informed, and able to articulate a coherent mission. A professional journal, it was thought, would aid this effort.

The first issue of *CWS* focused heavily on updates about existing clothing-optional sites. Many were, in effect, supplements to the *World Guide*. One issue might address sites in North America; the next might focus on Europe; this might be followed by one on the Caribbean; and another might publish articles on an array of topics relevant to nudism. Issue 1.2 for instance, covered topics as diverse as nude runners in San Francisco; sunbathing on urban rooftops; a nude demonstration in Wisconsin;

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Lee and North Swanson

the clothing-optional city of Cap d'Agde in France; a New York naturist's success in converting his basement into a nude swimming pool; gardening naked; the living "sculpture" of Alice Beberman; and movie and book reviews.

The first few years were relatively calm for TNS. The office staff found production and distribution of the magazine much easier than that of *Sun's* newspaper format. Unlike *Sun*, which was sent out to everyone who made a contribution to FBDC, *CWS* was mailed to the TNS membership.

Surprisingly few problems arose from nudist organizations that might have perceived *CWS* as competition to their publications. TNS and the American Sunbathing Association had mutually beneficial agreements in advertising each other's publications. Lee Baxandall wrote most of the material for the journal, but had the ready assistance of Smith in writing articles for the first four issues of *CWS*. Later, Nikki Craft would assist him in Oshkosh in a similar fashion. Later still, managing editor Pat O'Brien wrote many of the magazine's features.

A large portion of the articles and reviews were provided however, by the TNS membership. Although at present TNS has

a handful of writers who are willing to provide regular features for TNS' journal, the vast majority of the magazine's photos and articles are contributed by TNS members and supporters from around the world.

Acceptance of Naturism: The 1983 Gallup Poll

From 1980 through 1983, TNS was able to direct most of its energy to updating its *World Guide*, to establishing *CWS* as the journal of record for naturism in America, and to developing its schedule of gatherings. As TNS established itself in the non-naturist community as an informed and articulate voice for free beach use across the country, Baxandall found that he had increased access to the media. Often he could write articles for mainstream newspapers or magazines about a particular clothing-optional beach and they would print them. If the media wanted information on a particular skinny-dipping issue, they began to call Oshkosh for a naturist slant on it.

In 1983, TNS commissioned the respected Gallup Organization to survey Americans on three questions pertaining to nude recreation. The Gallup Organization polled a representative sample of 1,037

bathing should be able to do so without interference from officials as long as they do so at a beach that is accepted for that purpose? (71.6% said yes) (2) *Local and state governments now set aside public land for special types of recreation such as snowmobiling, surfing, and hunting. Do you think special and secluded areas should be set aside by the government for people to enjoy nude sunbathing?* (39.1% said yes) and (3) *Have you personally ever gone skinny-dipping or nude sunbathing in a mixed group of men or women either at a beach, at a pool, or somewhere else?* (14.7% said yes). (From the Gallup Organization, Inc., "Attitudes Toward Nude Sunbathing: A Custom Survey Conducted For The Naturists" June 1983.)

It was particularly gratifying to TNS to have reliable evidence documenting that nearly three fourths of Americans favored allowing naturists to use beaches clothes-free as long as the beach was known and accepted for that purpose. Clearly, there was little call for a rising number of legislative attacks on traditional nudity at free beaches. With the growth of social conservatism fostered in the 1980s, however, TNS found itself confronting an unexpected anti-nudity bias in the media, in politics, and in the population at large.

Changing Social Attitudes Bring New Challenges to Body & Nudity Acceptance

By the mid-1980s the young activists and hippies attuned to the benefits of body acceptance in the late 1960s and early 1970s began to feel their age. Quite a few appreciated that the Reagan years were kind to their pocketbooks. Many naturists began to enjoy the more sedentary life found at nudist clubs. With increasing incomes, they were accepted by nudist club owners who might earlier have viewed them as free-beach riffraff.

Meanwhile, many of the youth in the 1980s, who might have been expected to take up the naturist lifestyle and interests bought into the mass-marketing ploys of Madison Avenue—internalizing the advertising message that to be acceptable

It's a sad time for all of us. But we know that Lee is in a better place and far from the pain of this world. He's probably dancing naked with the angels right now. We will hold him in the Light.

Amy (Foote) Cerreto

men and women over the age of 18. Interviews were conducted by telephone between May 13 and May 30, 1983.

The three questions asked were: (1) *Do you believe that people who enjoy nude sun-*

Dedicated to the Memory of Lee Baxandall

It is with affection and respect that we remember Lee Baxandall, and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and other loved ones. Lee, if there is an afterlife, may it be clothes-free! How appropriate that Lee should pass away on Thanksgiving Day. Lee Baxandall had many things to be thankful for, and many people are thankful for having known Lee. He was a good person. He was intelligent and innovative, creative and complex, and underneath it all, he was a true humanitarian.

Years ago, I wrote a poem called "Free Beach" that I sent to Lee, and which he later published in his magazine, *Clothed with the Sun*. At the end of the poem I had written: "We shall mold our future with a pen, and unlock men's minds with reason, ink, and words. And all shall be free, clothed with the sun." I feel that Lee opened people's minds, and for this we owe him a depth of gratitude.

I also remember Lee as a man who encouraged scholarship by hiring young writers and giving them many opportunities to be published. Lee gave many of us the opportunity to become active in naturist literature and arts. Although I had written a series of children's stories that had been published in a children's magazine in the early seventies, Lee encouraged me to write about other subjects. During those early years, I wrote poems, articles, and book reviews for *Clothed with the Sun*, under my former name, JoAn Easton. He also encouraged me to write for one of his business publications, so that I could gain more notice as a writer and scholar. Writing for Lee was a tremendous learning experience,

and I will forever remain grateful to Lee for giving me that opportunity. He was a superb businessman, and a great mentor to those in the fields of naturism, business publications, journalism, and academics.

Lee encouraged the free exchange of ideas and solutions to problems that plagued the movement. It is Lee Baxandall who helped form the naturist movement we know today from many scattered free beach groups. He encouraged small groups to meet with others and band together for strength. He gave them the knowledge and power to act in ways that gradually began to change the way America, Canada, and other countries thought about body acceptance. In South Florida, that struggle culminated in its first legalized free beach at Haulover.

Lee helped familiarize us with laws and statutes that threatened the movement, and helped us find those who would challenge and change the existing laws. He arranged for the free beach leaders to hold meetings at places like Cypress Cove. With the support and encouragement of Lee and of Cypress Cove owner Jim Hadley, we attended meetings to learn how to change anti-nudity laws, to strengthen the free beach movement, and to form a closer alliance between naturists and nudists. Lee was at times, leader, father, role model, and mentor to us all.

When I was 13 I received a copy of a poem by an unknown author. It is called "God's Weaving," but it is also known under other names. This poem compares a life to a tapestry

interwoven with complex patterns of joy and sorrow that can only be viewed and fully appreciated from above. I feel that the best way to memorialize Lee is by sharing our personal memories of him, and by adding these thoughts to the already rich and varied fabric of tapestry of his life. It is as follows:

Life's Weaving / The Master Weaver

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me
I may not choose the colours –
He knows what they should be
For He can view the pattern
Upon the upper side
While I can see it only
From this, the underside.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow,
Which seemeth strange to me;
But I will trust His judgement,
And work on faithfully;
'Tis He who fills the shuttle,
And He knows what is best,
So I shall weave in earnest,
Leaving to Him the rest.

Not 'til the loom is silent,
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why;
The dark threads are as needed,
In the Weaver's skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

—Author Unknown

Naturally,
JoAn Easton

I refuse to believe that Lee has passed. He is too stubborn to let something like a human lifespan get in his way. He is way too busy for death. I remember him convincing me, over a quarter century ago, that indeed there were interesting stories to be told (in video) at "free beaches" that's what we called them then. I had told him that I loved going to them but that it was basically just a bunch of nude people sitting around taking in the sun. He was right. It was much more than that.

Eight documentaries later, there were still many untold stories. I always looked forward to Lee's visits to NYC when we would chat about everything. I was always surprised at his knowledge of "obscure" subjects. Plus he was always encouraging me to go to new places, cover new stories.

He could be stubborn and want his way many times and boy did we have fights. But we never lost the respect and love we had for each other.

Lee was a force of nature to be reckoned with and I have already missed him for a while when his body decided to engage him in a stubbornness contest.

Johanna, it must not have been easy these past years and I send you my love and admiration. Lee, you son of a bitch! I know your spirit is now making waves in the bigger universe and I want you to know that you are still very much alive in my heart next to my dad and mom who have also passed on in recent times and whom I talk with every day.

Big Hugs
Edin Velez
<http://edinvelez.com>
Associate Professor, Video Production
Visual and Performing Arts Department
Rutgers University, Newark



Marion Hagans, Keith Graham, and Nicky Hoffmann-Lee at a Texas naturist gathering.

All of us associated with the Club Orient Family are saddened by the loss of Lee Baxandall. For many of us Lee was naturism in North America! Over the last few decades, he stood as an uncompromising pillar in his determination to move the naturist movement forward. Lee's contributions are far too numerous to list, but his gifts to us of his intellect, perseverance and unfailing generosity will likely never be equaled. We, at Club Orient, join with naturists throughout the world in extending our condolences to his wife Johanna in mourning his passing. But we also celebrate his life and the joy his presence brought to so many.

The Club Orient Family

in a techno-hip society, they must dress the part. Any body covering that could be sold for profit (and preferably with the company logo on it for additional free advertising) was foisted on to this new generation.

As populations grew and more people sought the solace of the natural environment, secluded beaches and hot springs, once free of the intrusion from authorities, became crowded with people who either did not know that the site had been used nude for decades, or who were antagonistic to its continuing to be used that way. Complaints to the police produced citations and arrests in numbers seldom seen before.

The TNS office in Oshkosh received a rising number of calls for information about existing sites whose clothing-optional status was under attack. Advice was sought by naturists who had been cited, often without warning, merely for being nude at a beach. TNS recognized that

Responding to the Anti-Nudity Threat: The First Naturist Leadership Council

At the 1985 Eastern Gathering TNS was determined to find out what naturists were most concerned with as they saw many of their cherished clothing-optional sites under attack. The concern most often voiced was the perceived lack of communication among naturist and nudist leaders. To meet this need, TNS invited representatives from all naturist and nudist groups to meet at Blackstock, a “neutral” non-naturist site in South Carolina.

On September 21-23, 1985, representatives from eight naturist groups, primarily from the East Coast, met and formed the Naturist Leadership Council.⁹ The purpose was to help develop grassroots leaders in clubs and beach support groups. NLC hoped to provide a clearinghouse for information useful to participating

Lee built up a marvelous community that thousands of us are grateful for the privilege of enjoying. We have a lot to thank and honor Lee for. We should also, at this time, pay tribute to Nicky Hoffman and the rest of the TNS staff for the happiness they gave Lee after he retired, because it clearly gave Lee great satisfaction, in the years that he could not be at the gatherings with us, to know that what he worked so hard to build was still being sustained and expanded by the people he had enjoyed working closely with in his younger and healthier years. As we continue to have fun at naturist gatherings, we should never stop reminding ourselves that Lee is with us, and we should never stop thanking the people who are keeping Lee’s fond creation alive.

Ben Alexander
Baltimore, MD

it must develop a means of meeting these challenges while continuing the mission of promoting naturism through the journal, gatherings, and the network of beach support groups, naturist clubs, and SIGs.

naturist individuals and groups who needed assistance in battling anti-nudity policies and legislation. The goal was to bring as many naturist groups into NLC as possible and to keep the organization’s grassroots spirit.

My deepest condolences to you and your crew on your loss. The profound impact that Lee made can never be measured. May the rest of us measure up to what he started for us.

Wayne

NLC also was to bring together different groups who shared similar problems, so that they could combine efforts to their mutual benefit. For example, John Kyff of the National Capital Naturists in Washington, D.C. began a file of all legal documents available to him pertaining to social nudity. This information would then be made available to lawyers representing naturists’ interests.

The first chair of NLC was John Fitzgerald of the National Capital Naturists. Other early leaders included Beth Glatt, Michelle Handler, and John Mills. By April 1988, however, TNS acknowledged in *CWS* that NLC had not lived up to its potential. Kyff had been able to amass a sizeable collection of legal documents, but aside from meeting at a few TNS gatherings, NLC had not attracted the attention of other clubs or naturist groups.

Meanwhile, NLC leader Michelle Handler had decided that one goal of the naturist movement should be to actively oppose the pornography industry. She also was unsatisfied with what appeared to her to be an emphasis on attractive women in the pages of *CWS*. She became disruptive to NLC, and the group found itself spending what little time it had together trying to respond to her personal agenda.

NLC Becomes NNLC

In June 1988, at the Eastern Gathering at Camp Akiba in Pennsylvania, leaders from TNS and ASA met to form the Naturist/Nudist Leadership Council.¹⁰

Loosely based on the defunct NLC, NNLC planned to focus on legal challenges and lobbying efforts. Membership would be open to individuals rather than to organizations.

A steering committee was formed to make sure NNLC did not fall prey to the same internal inefficiencies as NLC had. The committee members responsible for the startup of NNLC were Lee Beverage, Cec Cinder, Ron Burich (the first chair), George McCormick, Mary Lou Schloss, Durand Steiger, and Turner Stokes. To NNLC's advantage, it had the backing of both TNS and ASA. Never before had these two organizations worked this closely together on a project of this magnitude and importance.

Probably the most important achievement of NNLC was its sponsorship of the February 25, 1989 Legal Conference on Nude Recreation held at the Dulles Airport Holiday Inn in northern Virginia. Suggested initially by Robert Ellis Smith

of Rhode Island, the conference allowed NNLC and lawyers involved in nudity cases the opportunity to share advice and to plan cooperative strategies for defending naturist freedoms across North America.

I first met Lee on Virginia Key in 1980 when I was organizing the birth of South Florida Free Beaches. His enthusiasm to promote the clothing-optional lifestyle inspired me to travel cross country meeting officials and other naturists to help pursue the legalization of nude beaches thus changing my entire life.

Barbara Khan Peterson

In many people's minds however, the most useful function of ACFRI was that, for a while, it bridged the gap between TNS and the ASA. In the late 1980s the ASA remained firmly aligned with the specific interests of its affiliated nudist clubs. It understood its role to be an umbrella organization that would protect and foster the business interests of ASA clubs (and not necessarily the many non-ASA clubs, and certainly not the free beaches).

TNS had emerged as the only effective voice for clothing-optional use of public lands. Although ASA at the time claimed it could take care of everyone's needs who wished to enjoy social nudity, that goal was obviously not within the organization's ability or desire. TNS on the other hand, did wish to make naturism inclusive, but was not in a position to offer that kind of legal assistance or business advice to the landed clubs that ASA was experienced in providing. ACFRI, therefore, was supposed to be a link for the two organizations, with complete allegiance to neither.

ACFRI was to be a membership-based and membership-controlled group. It expected to receive its funding from major contributors and individual memberships. Its initial nine-member board was chosen from experienced naturist leaders across the U.S. and Canada. They included Lee Baxandall, Toni Egbert, Lee Beverage, Larry Landrum, George McCormick, David Southall, Turner Stokes, Judy Williams, and Walt Zadanoff.

So far in the development of unified, or at least unifying, naturist/nudist coordination, TNS and Lee Baxandall had been playing dual roles. On the one hand Baxandall used TNS to press for an effective force to meet anti-nudity challenges, and he clearly wanted to have a guiding hand in each of their manifestations. At the same time he hoped to see a capable group of grassroots-oriented naturists emerge and take the reins themselves. TNS continually provided a comfortable location in its gatherings for formative meetings, and CWS was always available to report on the groups' efforts and successes.

NNLC struggled, however, to turn itself into a cohesive and effective political force. Its leadership structure never quite solidified and funding was always a problem. Without sufficient funds, NNLC was unable to fulfill its goals of mounting court challenges to anti-nudity policies or of acquiring lobbyists when needed.

ACFRI

The Association for Clothes Free Rights, Incorporated, was formed at the Eastern Gathering in June 1989, again with the goal of meeting legal challenges.¹¹ Replacing the NNLC, ACFRI was deemed "all-inclusive." It was to look after the interests not only of naturists and nudists, but also of any other group who was sympathetic to clothes-free lifestyles.

ACFRI hoped to identify specific, winnable legal cases that would have a positive effect on clothes-free living. It also planned to become more effective in public relations and in controlling how the media and thus the general population would perceive clothes-free rights.

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TNS MEMBER SERVICES

NLC, NNLC, and ACFRI each were independent of TNS, yet clearly had their roots in and primary support from the Oshkosh-based group. Meanwhile, those members of ACFRI who were primarily associated with ASA were trying to steer the group in an ASA direction, and thus kept ACFRI from fulfilling its mission as acting as an autonomous bridge between TNS and ASA. Some TNS members, like Durand Steiger, began to ask why TNS did not just develop a political task force of its own.

Throughout the 1980s, Steiger argued, TNS had proved itself to be a successful naturist organization. Only TNS and ASA were by then, considered “major players” in the American clothing-optional movement. TNS had a respectable vehicle in *CWS* that could be used to get the task force’s message out to a wide group of people. And with TNS in control—up front as well as behind the scenes—its political action group would avoid the pitfalls of internal disagreement brought about by having leaders from two occasionally disparate groups.

The Naturist Action Committee

At the June 14-17, 1990 TNS Eastern Gathering, once again in Pennsylvania, TNS finally decided to press its members into forming a dynamic, effective political action group of their own. By 1990, TNS had enough members, enough respect among the naturist and non-naturist communities, enough useful ties with other naturist organizations, enough experienced and battle-seasoned leaders, and a journal of sufficient and consistent quality to take on the task of forming—finally—a model naturist action group.

Responding in part to Steiger’s remarks, TNS took the summer to decide how best to organize this new group. In a second Eastern gathering that year, held at Camp Akiba in Pennsylvania on August 16-19, 1990, TNS officially formed the Naturist Action Committee, and soon after registered it as a 501(c)4 nonprofit corporation.¹² A Board of Directors pro term was



Lee and Barbara Khan Peterson.

selected with Toni Egbert as Chair. NAC was to be known as the political adjunct of TNS, but retain enough autonomy to move in the directions the elected committee wished. Lee Baxandall would serve in a largely advisory capacity as a permanent but non-voting member.

The board was set up to be democratically elected by and from the TNS membership, with each TNS member getting one equal vote. Any qualified TNS member may run for one of the nine board positions, and stand for re-election after three years. TNS’ magazine was designated the official organ of NAC. In 1992, TNS would create the separate, monthly *N Newsletter* for timely political and legal updates. Soon after its inception, NAC took on editorial responsibilities for the 4-

8-page publication, and it’s now more commonly known as the “*NAC Newsletter*.”

NAC’s stated goals were threefold: legal action, lobbying, and public relations. On August 20, 1991, the first elected committee convened at Empire Haven, New York. Those elected by the TNS membership were Lee Beverage, John Boteler, Toni Egbert, John Kyff, Johanna Moore, Mollie Moore-Sullivan, Morley Schloss, Durand Steiger, and Brian Wright. Lee Baxandall was a member *ex officio* and Kevin Kearney was hired as NAC’s lobbyist and Public Affairs Council.

NAC has succeeded where the earlier activist groups failed. Today, NAC is the most effective naturist or nudist activist group in North America. Although the names among the board members have

I DREAMED I SAW LEE BAXANDALL

By Keath and Cindy Graham

*I dreamed I saw Lee Baxandall,
As naked as can be
Said some to Lee, 'You should feel shame'
Said Lee, 'I disagree'
Said Lee, 'I dis-a-gree.'*

*'In many places, Lee," said I,
Him standing strong and tall
'Our cause was challenged in the courts,
Said Lee, 'we fought them all,'
Said Lee, 'We fought them one and all.'*

*'The opposition hurt us, Lee,
They shot our causes down.'
'Takes more than lies to steal our rights'
Besides, 'We're still around.'
Thanks to Lee, We're still around.*

*And speaking there as big as life
On grounds where all did play,
'Body acceptance, the idea
Nude recreation is the way.
Nude recreation is the way.'*

*Where Naturists with loved ones gather,
Clothed with but the sun
Lee Baxandall is in their midst.
But he's not the only one
He's not the only one.*

*From snowy Oshkosh, everywhere,
On every beach that's free,
Where Naturists play and organize
It's there you'll find our Lee
It's there you'll find our Lee*

*I dreamed I saw Lee Baxandall,
As naked as can be,
Said some to Lee, 'You should feel shame,'
Said Lee, 'I disagree.'
Said Lee, 'I dis-a-gree.'"*

Much will surely be written about his organizing thousands of naturists across the continent, and bringing previously shunned groups into the movement—as well as leading the way into political activism. I want to add that Lee brought a new intellectual dimension to the mindless chatter of nudist publications. He was not afraid to wrestle with deep and important ideas. He accomplished much. We will not see his like again during our lifetimes.

Paul LeValley



My partners John and Nancy Dulle and I had the pleasure of hosting the Western Naturist Gathering at Silver Valley Sun Club in 1988, where I discovered that Lee was, indeed a remarkable man. He was dedicated to a fault in the support

and promotion of the nudist lifestyle. He will truly be missed.

Walt Zadanoff
V.P. AANR –
Florida Region



Lee and Shirley Mason at Haulover.

A Tribute to Lee Baxandall

Lee Baxandall will always be the irrefutable “Father of the Free Beach Movement,” a timeless visionary and a quintessential leader. I feel fortunate and blessed to be one of his naturist “children” who knew him personally, had his council, trust, and encouragement.

When I think of Lee and his legacy, I think of the nursery rhyme: “Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? With silver bells, and cockled shells, and pretty maids all in a row.”

Lee’s deep love for the simple pleasure of skinny-dipping and his belief in a person’s natural right to enjoy this innocent activity on public lands sparked in him a passion. Lee became quite contrary – for good reason – when he organized a protest and stood against the closure of the traditional clothing optional beach by the National Park Service at Truro Beach on Cape Cod. Losing that beach and that fight, lit a torch in him that he carried for the remainder of his life. But out of something bad came something good.

The vision Lee had to secure our traditional “free beaches” started as a hobby but quickly became his avocation. Like gardening, he enriched the soil with his personal income, talent, hard work, tireless dedication and passion. He planted his visions and ideas by starting

The Naturist Society, then writing and publishing two magazines to document the history of the free beach movement and nude recreation. That led him to write the World Guide to Nude Beaches and Resorts – considered the naturists travel bible. He organized dozens of free beach groups and started naturist “Gatherings” throughout the U.S. so naturists could meet, share ideas, socialize, and form special interest groups (SIG’s) – which led to two successful national Gay naturist organizations – Gay Naturist International (GNI) and International Men Enjoying Naturism (IMEN). He was the creator of “National Nude Weekend” (now known as “Nude Recreation Week”) and seeing the need for people in the business of organized nude recreation, Lee started the Trade Association for Nude Recreation (TANR). When anti-nudity laws threaten our very existence, he helped form and fund the Naturist Action Committee (NAC) and its adjunct, the Naturist Education Committee (NEF).

There’s no doubt that Lee’s life body of naturist work has directly touched tens of thousands of organized naturist-nudists. But his vision has touched millions of skinny-dippers many times over. Just consider Haulover Beach as just one of the free beach sites whose

creation was inspired by two of his children – the Masons – who became members, then presidents of South Florida Free Beaches, a free beach group Lee helped organize.

These institutions are the silver bells and cockled shells. We are the first generation of Lee’s “pretty maids” – his children, infused with his passion, love for free beaches, and contrary. Let’s continue to honor him by keeping his vision alive and through our deeds, be an inspiration for the next season of the garden he started.

There have been several people that have inspired me to stay involved with Haulover Beach and nude recreation, but without a doubt, Lee Baxandall has been my greatest teacher for understanding how very precious our clothing optional beaches are and why they must be preserved. That is why I formed Beach Education Advocates for Culture, Health, Environment and Safety Foundation Institute (B.E.A.C.H.E.S.), created a beach concession at Haulover to help fund its mission, and a Board of Governors made up of some of Lee’s best free beach-activist children. You worked to pass on the vision. I see it and it will live.

Shirley Mason

changed (only Morley Schloss remains from the original board), the unity found in TNS' distinctly naturist philosophy, and the dedication to defending and promoting clothing-optional freedoms on public and private lands, keeps the board of directors and the many TNS members with whom they work on track.

The Naturist Education Foundation

In February 1993, after three years of planning and submitting applications to the Internal Revenue Service, TNS announced the official formation of NAC's sister organization, the Naturist Education Foundation. With designated 501(c)3 status from the IRS, NEF is a charitable institution. Naturists can make contributions to NEF to support its mission and use the donations as a tax write-off. NEF's goal is to educate politicians, business owners, and the general public about naturism. The board members of NAC are automatically also the board members of NEF.

Over the years NEF has produced informative videos and booklets, and has helped sponsor the Legal Symposium (October 9-11, 1998, organized by South Florida Free Beaches and then NEF board member Shirley Mason), as well as smaller events like the NEF Naturism/Christianity Conference (April 17-18, 1998) and the NEF Writers Workshop (January 15-17, 1999).

Wanting to know if the acceptance of skinny-dipping among U.S. adults had



The NAC/NEF board enjoying a hay ride at Turtle Lake Resort in Michigan.

changed in the years since the 1983 Gallup poll, NEF commissioned a similar poll in 2000, this time with the nationally respected Roper Starch Organization. The 2000 Roper poll showed that the number of people who believed that those "who enjoy nude sunbathing should be able to do so without interference from officials as long as they do so at a beach that is accepted for that purpose" had risen from 71.6% to 80%. It showed that those believing that "special and secluded areas should be set aside by the government for people who enjoy nude sunbathing" had risen from 39.1% to 48%. And it showed that the number of people who had "gone 'skinny-dipping' or nude sunbathing in a mixed group of men and women either at the beach, at a pool, or somewhere else" had risen from 14.7% to 25%.¹³

In 2006, NEF commissioned Roper Public Affairs (the company had changed its name since 2000) to ask the three questions yet again. For the first question regarding interference of nude sunbathing, the number had dipped to 74%—higher than in 1983, but a bit lower than in 2000. For the second question asking about setting aside public land for nude sunbath-

ing, the percent who said the government should do so had risen again, this time to 54%. And for the third question asking how many had gone skinny-dipping in mixed company, the number remained steady at 25%. These polls—stretching from 1983 to 2006—show a firm U.S. acceptance of at least some forms of skinny-dipping and nude sunbathing on public lands. All three polls were reliable enough to draw the attention of the media, legislators, and business communities around the world.¹⁴

The 2000s have been busy years for NEF. In 2003 NEF published Mark Storey's *Cinema au Naturel: A History of Nudist Film*, the first fully developed study of nudism as presented since the 1930s in film and video. That same year, NEF produced an 18-minute VHS video (released on DVD in 2007) called *Chasing the Sun*. Directed by respected filmmaker and videographer Edin Velez, NEF intended the video as an introduction to naturism for legislators. Velez had produced nearly a dozen naturist videos in partnership with TNS in the 1980s, while TNS staff photographer Michael Cooney continued TNS' video

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Expanding Grassroots Activism: NACAR & NEFAR Programs

By the mid-1990s NAC had become an efficient political action group whose professionalism and effectiveness had engendered respect from naturist and non-naturist groups alike. Soon however, the board had to acknowledge its need for some assistance. Having become quite adept at finding anti-nudity legislation even before it became known to the general public, and learning techniques to defeat it in legislative committees, NAC wanted to expand on its own success.

In 1995, NAC established the Naturist Action Committee Area Representative program. NAC Area Reps, or NACARs, are TNS members who are willing and able to oversee a specified geographical region as an assistant to the NAC board member covering that area. For instance, someone from a beach support group in California might become a NACAR to track action at that specific beach for the NAC board member covering California. The NACAR would also be in a position locally to watch for any city, county, or state anti-nudity legislation. If bills, ordinances, or changes in law enforcement arise, the NACAR would be in a good position to garner support from local naturists to help NAC defend the area's naturist freedoms.

In 1996 NEF established an analogous program of Naturist Education Foundation Area Representatives (i.e. NEFARs) who wish to assist NEF in promoting naturism, but who are not particularly interested in doing the political or legislative work on which NAC tends to focus much of its energy.

After going through the learning process of creating and dissolving the NLC, NNLC, and ACFRI, The Naturist Society seems to have hit upon a recipe for success with NAC. The premier activist group for naturism continues to boast a success

rate percentile in the 90s in challenging state anti-nudity legislation. There is today a reliable core of committee members, NACARS, professional volunteers, and financial contributors. In 1994 NAC retained Washington lobbyist Scootch Pankonin to assist the board on federal and state nudity policy and legislation issues. She served in that capacity until 2001. In 1997, NAC hired Bob Morton of Central Texas Nudists as Executive Director, and he has served as chair of both NAC and NEF from then until today.

To make itself even more effective in getting information out to naturists and to direct letters, phone calls, faxes, and e-mails to key legislators considering important bills pertaining to nudity, NAC has established an online NAC Alert System delivered by a variety of naturist list servers. Coupled with the *NAC Newsletter*, the NAC Alerts have proven invaluable in marshaling immediate grassroots naturist support when the need arises.

NAC's leadership remains firmly rooted in the TNS membership. The NAC board takes as its responsibility to assist individuals, clubs, and other naturist groups as they submit ideas for defending or advancing naturist freedoms. In a new millennium, when business and corporate paradigms are taken as axiomatic, a volunteer grassroots organization may seem anachronistic. But so far it has worked surprisingly well.

Clothed with the Sun Becomes N: Nude & Natural

In the spring of 1989 (to back up a bit), TNS sent its members their first copy of *Nude & Natural* magazine.¹⁵ TNS chose a new title for its official journal for a number of reasons. First, some people new to the magazine had trouble understanding the name; they were hear-

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feature

I was sorry to hear about Lee Baxandall's passing. He was a great man, and I imagine a great friend to you. He very positively impacted my life too.

It was because of Lee that I did my first workshop. At the Pocono Picnic Company I asked him about a workshop I wanted to attend. And being the leader he was, he said "Why don't you lead it?" Which I did a few weeks later at the Turtle Lake Gathering, that very same summer.

Doing that workshop and the many that have followed, the friendships made, and the openness and connections experienced have been a big part of my healing and growth. So I feel deeply indebted for the part he played in my life.

I am sorry I wasn't closer to him to get to know him better. I will miss him. Thank you for all your efforts to continue what he started.

All the Best Naturally,
Bryon

I was blessed to attend the memorial service. I wanted to know the man who, though we never met, had a profound impact on my life. My first exposure to social nudism was via 'Clothed With The Sun'. After the untimely death of my wife 3 years ago, I joined TNS and have found great comfort, support and acceptance in the community. This has been instrumental in my grief recovery. Lee's work has given a voice to my feelings when I did not know how to express myself. Thank you and God bless you all.

Fred Pings



I was saddened to hear of the recent passing of Lee Baxandall. For many generations, Mr. Baxandall was instrumental in promoting naturism, and opening up many venues for people to learn about naturism. His successful efforts have given all of us the ability to enjoy naturism as a part of our lifestyle.

Everyday at Desert Sun Resort, we get the privilege of looking at the "Lee Baxandall Bridge", which was dedicated, and named after Lee, on February 13, 2003. This bridge proudly towers over Indian Avenue and connects the Desert Sun Resort to the DSIII condominiums on the other side of the street. We will always look at this bridge with great appreciation for all that Mr. Baxandall has done for the naturist community. He will be missed very much.

Elizabeth Young
President
Desert Sun Resort -
Palm Springs, California

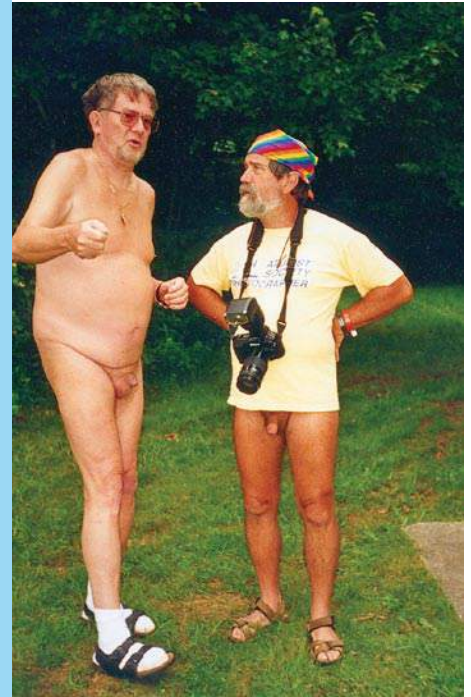
My remembrance of Lee is very simple. Without him I'd have known NOTHING about the naturist movement. When I first became interested (in 1988) I was able to find in the Kansas City library exactly THREE articles that dealt with naturism and nude recreation - two in a periodical called *Parks and Recreation* and one in a magazine called *Trailer Life*.

One of these gave Lee's name and The Naturist Society's address. Without this connection I seriously doubt that I'd have had the resources I needed to continue as an advocate. But Lee made it clear from the outset that I was not alone.

He also was very good at recruiting people. He answered all of my early inquiries with terse, to-the-point comments and, at one point published in "N" a rambling essay I'd really intended only for a local club newsletter. Like it or not, from that point on I was committed (and hooked). The rest, for what it's worth, is history.

I regret that Lee wasn't able to survive for a few more years. With a more pragmatic and hospitable administration in Washington, I have the feeling that the quest for public access and acceptance of nude recreation will make major gains. Unquestionably, Lee's enduring influence will have been (and will continue to be) the most important catalyst.

Dave Bitters



Lee and Mark Orpen in deep discussion.



Early NAC/NEF board at Empire Haven.

In the early days, Lee and I spent a lot of time on the phone—no e-mail in those days. Long letters as well—not all were placed in the file cabinet either. I don't have any here—long gone.

We were both a couple of bottles of wine into the after-dinner hour when we came up with the idea of the first naturist whale watch which we did in '83. That was the first year Lee moved the Eastern Naturist Gathering from June to August in order to accommodate the boating event.

I was also helping to facilitate the Eastern Gathering that year and could not be in two places at once.

We didn't always see eye to eye and had some heated conversations - read volcanic - but we always maintained our friendship and commitment to the cause of naturism.

In latter years we drifted apart as can happen over time, but that is natural progression. He will be missed. At the same time I think everyone has faith in the leadership you have given us in the ensuing years since he stepped down.

DMK

ing “*Closed with the Sun*” when “*Clothed with the Sun*” was spoken. Even after the title was clarified, most people still did not catch the historical reference to the Home Colony.

Second, although TNS recognized that altering names and logos is always a risky move, it decided that a change would offer the opportunity to reinforce the biological value of social nudity by linking the words “nude” and “natural.” The words are neutral regarding issues peripheral to naturism, and focus attention on two of the core values of naturists: social nudity and a sympathetic relationship to the natural environment.

The new name correctly downplayed any misperception that naturism was merely a sun-oriented activity. After all, people can enjoy naturism indoors, in the shade, or at night; and with the mid-1980s panic over skin cancer, TNS was justifiably

My sincere condolences to the family of Lee Baxandall at this time of his passing. He made a great contribution to many people who were better able to accept themselves and their fellow humans because of what he did.

Sincerely,
Jack Thro

shy of evoking a sun-related metaphor. (Note the similar and later change from the “American Sunbathing Association” to the “American Association for Nude Recreation.”)

In addition to a name change, TNS adopted a new logo. TNS member Carl Hild suggested early on that a simple, cryptic logo was needed, one that would allow fellow naturists to recognize one another without the need to blatantly advertise one’s preference for nudity. Hild provided some rough sketches from which designer Jack White adapted the slanted capital *N* for TNS. Today the “*N*,” standing foremost for “nude,” “naked,” and “natural,” Lee Baxandall has pointed out, may also be associated with other affirming words like “nice” or “nurturing.”

Nude & Natural magazine has continued the tradition of journalistic excellence established by *Clothed with the Sun*. No other magazine, newspaper, or newsletter printed in English comes close to *N* in its depth and breadth of coverage of newsworthy events relating to non-lewd social nudity. *N* in size alone nearly doubles most other naturist publications around the world. TNS is proud to be the leader in covering naturist history, social commentary, arts coverage, travel reports, and other naturist-related topics.

Skinny-Dipper Shop

In January 1990, TNS decided to make use of its Oshkosh office storefront on Main Street by opening the Skinny-Dipper Shop. The store sells magazines, T-shirts, DVDs, books, and other TNS merchandise. It was also a walk-in source for people looking for information about local skinny-dipping opportunities.

The public was generally accepting of the store’s very visible naturist presence in the heart of Oshkosh. City ordinances prohibited displaying nude photos within sight of people walking by outside of the store, so one had to come inside the store to find a copy of *N* magazine and other TNS merchandise. Still, the prominent signs and displays in the window let everyone know that skinny-dipping was a part of Oshkosh.

In 2002 the TNS office moved to a newer building a few blocks off Main Street, and though there is far less foot

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Lee Baxandall... Nativist Hero

From the time I first met Lee Baxandall in 1979, he took me under his naked "wing," so to speak, and mentored me in all things naturist. I admired his fiery and determined free spirit and multi-faceted life. From his love of art, theatre, and literature to his belief in freedom from censorship and government domination, Lee faced life headlong, fighting bigotry and close-mindedness every step of the way. Throughout the very beginning of the original naturist movement Lee fought for student and societal rights. Eventually, he founded the Free Beaches Documentation Center in his hometown of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Its inaugural publication was called *Clothed with the Sun*, which is how I first discovered TNS. Lee and TNS became a source of great strength in the early years of our 40-year-plus battle to keep Wreck Beach in British Columbia both undeveloped and free.

I accepted Lee's invitation to my first TNS naturist gathering in the mid-80's at Lupin Lodge, outside of Los Gatos, California. Thus began many years of friendship as Lee, through the Naturist Society, mentored us through a multitude of Wreck Beach battles. And buttressing his support always, was his tower of strength, his beloved Johanna.

A kaleidoscope of images come to mind of Lee: The wonderful photo of him, Phineas and Johanna frolicking in a lush tropical pool, the one from a past *World Guide*...he and Johanna on the cover of *N Magazine* while they were at the INF Congress in Europe...his amazing sense of humor and great intelligence (he was so bemused by the fact that I raised 1500 crickets in my float home, that he gifted me with a solid silver cricket belt buckle which I still cherish)...his impassioned speeches at TNS Gatherings, and his unyielding defense of naturism...Lee on the TNS naked bus tour of Europe (but particularly his naked grocery shopping in Cap d'Agde). It was my great honor to have been awarded the 2006 Baxandall Naturist Leadership Award "in recognition of exceptional volunteer service on behalf of naturism."

Lee has left us an unparalleled naturist legacy, but above all, his love and loyalty made him our great friend. Lucky us!

We are forever indebted, Lee. We salute you with love,
Judy and Your Wreck Beach Family

• For what it's worth, you and the others at Naturist
• Society headquarters are in my thoughts. I am
• sorry to hear of Lee Baxandall's passing.

Christopher Dyer



Lee presenting Judy Williams a Lifetime TNS membership.

Lee Baxandall attended the second Camping Bares Deep Creek campout in February 1977 three years before he founded the Naturist Society. It had to be the spectacle of large numbers of nudists dancing around a raging campfire in freezing winter weather that sold him on the plan for a national nudist organization.

Bob Holden

He was a visionary
and an inspiration to
us all.

Mike Abramson

traffic or public awareness of the store, the Skinny-Dipper Shop is still open for walk-in customers. Approximately once a year an undercover police officer steps into the store to see if the public outside can see any photos containing nudity. So far, these visits have not resulted in any problems for TNS.

TNS & Nude Networking in Europe

TNS began in the early 1980s as what seemed to many to be the younger—and perhaps estranged—sister to the older and larger American Sunbathing Association (now AANR). In its first decade however, TNS matured to take the leading role in America on the issue of nudity on public lands. As AANR and TNS enter the year 2009, both acknowledge that they and other naturist organizations need to work together if they are to continue to grow and be effective.

TNS has, from the earliest years, sought out opportunities to work with other like-minded groups. The attempts to form inter-organizational coalitions like the Naturist/Nudist Leadership Council are an example. TNS has also, when the



Clara Bailey playfully painting Lee.

Separately Lee Baxandall and I came to realize the link between the right to privacy, my specialty, and naturism, his specialty. Luckily for me, he tracked me down in the early 80s, and together we informed each others' work and philosophies. I saw his social activism as a model for mine, but I knew that I did not have the bold courage that he did. In addition, Lee's activism enhanced my personal joy in skinny-dipping and made more opportunities available.

In the early stages of his illness, he rose before a group of attorneys defending naturists rights. His shoulders slumped a little and he had a few tremors. He was naked. "I always said, 'It's all about body acceptance. And so here I am. I never said it was about body acceptance only when your body is exactly how you want it to be!'"

Robert Ellis Smith, Publisher, PRIVACY JOURNAL

opportunity has presented itself, actively sought ties with naturist groups outside of the United States.

On June 14-18, 1986, TNS representatives and two dozen others from the U.S., Greece, Chile, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Finland, and India met for the first International Conference on Nude Beaches, held at Antiparos, Greece.¹⁶ Angelos Mimikopoulos of Greece suggested the idea to TNS in 1983, but it took three years to bring the conference to fruition. Attendees offered position papers on a variety of topics relating to free beach philosophy and history. Lee Baxandall chaired the series of meetings.

The following year, Mimikopoulos, Baxandall, and Johanna Moore responded to the suggestion of photo-journalist Leif Heilberg, organized a second International Conference on Nude Beaches, which took place in Hungary from June 27 to July 5, 1987.¹⁷ This again drew naturist leaders from around the world. A third such event was organized by TNS for June 31-July 7, 1990 in the Provence region of France.¹⁸

The Naturist Society Network: Policies Support Inclusion of Singles, Gays, Families, Women

What distinguishes TNS from other naturist groups in many people's minds is the organization's commitment to inclusion. Freely acknowledging that its members are diverse in opinion, interests, and lifestyle, and that many of them will not agree with everything they see reported on or praised in *N*, TNS nevertheless has a distinctive leaning on certain issues that are sometimes only obliquely related to naturism. Many of these issues have to do with the acceptance of others.

TNS established the Naturist Network as a way to promote those naturist clubs, resorts, and beach-support groups that adhere to TNS' basic philosophy. These groups agree to support TNS and allow TNS members to take part in their activities; and their policies and activities must not be in conflict with the TNS Statement of Naturist Values, which says, in part: "The Naturist Society does not recognize

groups or clubs which promise or intend primarily to promote sexual activity, or which practice a policy of exclusion based on race, religion, age, sexual preference, or gender.”

TNS acknowledges that a private club or group has every right to choose its associates. A club could limit its membership to left-handed, middle-aged, Chinese astronomers if it wanted to. However, to be part of the Nurturist Network, clubs and groups must practice a high degree of inclusiveness.

As the 1983 TNS-commissioned Gallup poll showed, and as any naturist club operator can verify, men tend to be more comfortable trying out naturism for the first time than are women. Anecdotal studies indicate that once people become

Our son Sean who was conceived at Eastover, and who has attended the TNS Eastern Naturists Gathering at Eastover each year since he was born, was given “Eastover” as his legal middle name. Upon news of Lee’s passing, it was explained to Sean, the link between himself and Lee, and he understand’s that if it were not for Lee Baxandall’s tireless efforts with his staff to bring his naturist flock to Eastover, he would not bear the middle name of Eastover today.

Peter, Maureen, Sean E.

involved in social nudity, women enjoy it more and feel they derive more benefit from it than men.¹⁹ Still, in some cases clubs and groups find themselves with what seems to be a gender imbalance of men over women.

TNS does not accept this as sufficient to warrant systematic denial to singles

of access to club or group activities. Singles contribute as many valuable resources to a group as do married people. They offer help in volunteer projects; they provide needed income for the group; and they help the group more closely match the demographics of society.

The population outside the boundaries of the club walls or group functions is not 100 percent married. There are singles and married people, young and old, black and white, rich and poor. Since TNS claims vigorously that naturism is natural for all people, unless there is good reason to suspect that an individual will cause problems to the health and integrity of the group, he or she should not be excluded for being single. TNS’ Nurturist Network Participating Agreement specifically states: “It is acknowledged that single male visitors may be subject to a quota if Club deems this unavoidable. If Club does limit the admission of males without accompanying females according to a ‘quota’ system, this must be clearly published and fairly administered...clubs or groups whose quota policies are so strict as to create a *de facto* exclusion of singles may be removed from the Network.”

TNS has also led other naturist (or nudist) organizations in its demand for acceptance of gays at naturist functions. This does not mean that TNS accepts public sexual behavior from anyone in naturist contexts such as clubs or free beaches, as some critics of the policy have implied. What it means is that it does not matter to TNS whether naturists are straight or gay; and as long as a visitor at a naturist setting behaves in a family-friendly manner, he or she should be welcome.

The phrase “family-friendly” is chosen carefully here, in lieu of the more commonly used “family-oriented.” TNS wishes to promote and be associated only with naturist groups that provide an atmosphere that would be appropriate for families with children (and grandparents) of a variety of ages. The groups need not be oriented to families to the extent that all activities must be designed to appeal to the interests of young children and their parents. No group is likely to plan activities that are of interest to families with youngsters at all times. TNS does ask however, that its clubs and groups demand etiquette, behavior, and activities that would be comfortable for most families, should families be there. Some groups



Lee was delighted to meet high school classmate Joy Ellen Ryan at a naturist gathering.

No surprise....but no less a sense of loss, now that he's gone. Lee will always be my Renaissance Man.....we only clicked when we realized we were in NYC in the glory days of The Living Theatre. There was a time when he participated in grooming me for the inevitable wrongful arrest; he began the education of naturists to first know their history and glean from case law every glimmer of light that could make our case.

His finding the Florida Supreme Court's pronouncement that "mere innocent nudity" is NOT indecent.....gave birth to the movement in Florida-----just as we lost our network of clothing-optional beaches to the State park system.

He further found in that case that the State Supreme Court saw that "nudity, when combined with another form of protected speech may itself be protected" gave foundation to Theatre on the Beach initiated with our wearing of the Bill of Rights and a series of plays which included nudity as well as the nude peace sign.

Only because we two Living Theatre die-hards came together with a few good ACLU attorneys did we/Florida Naturists successfully make our case not only in defense of skinny-dippers wrongfully arrested, but as we learned from experience, we put ourselves on the offensive and successfully challenged the State to make their case and most often they failed -----even to enact a FL statute to criminalize mere innocent nudity.

there's so much more..... and now he's gone..... I think of him always and always will and I know, the way I do the things I do are often as his student and often even without his knowing, wanting to make him smile and be proud of my actions and intent.

I loved him as the term Namaste' defines.....the god in me saw and was fortunate to know the god in him.....

peace, hope & love
ta



Naturists have a lot to be thankful for. Lee's vision and enthusiasm molded us into a unit of awareness, which helped naturists all over the U.S., and most likely spread far beyond that. He urged me to get involved with San Onofre and was there with advice, encouragement and help when I needed it. He convinced me that one person could make a difference!

Marianna Handler,
The "Beachmom" of San Onofre



Johanna, Lee, and past AANR president Leonita Moore.

associated with TNS skirt the edges of this admittedly vague request, but TNS continues to do what it can to promote inclusive yet healthy naturist environments.

I am saddened by the news of Lee's passing. I remember at one of my first naturist gatherings, he walked up to me and said "Welcome Mitzi." This was before I was a NACAR and I had no idea that he even knew my name. He was always personable like that. He wasn't afraid to try new idea for naturism and it was he that started making naturists gatherings fun, not just a bunch of meetings. I believe he was the first to have a magazine of nudist beaches and resorts (*The World Guide*.) I'm glad that I got to know he and Johanna while he still owned TNS.

Mitzi

Three other tendencies distinguish TNS from other naturist organizations. The philosophy of TNS, if not of every one of its individual members, strongly and publicly supports the development of women's rights; the preservation of the natural environment; and the advancement of the arts.

Since the 1980s, TNS has published nearly 30 features on topfree equality in *CWS* and *N*. The Naturist Action Committee has worked with Topfree

rights groups like the Topfree Equality Rights Association, led by Canada's Paul Rapoport,²⁰ and has funded challenges in court to give women the same right as men to bare their chests in public. Perhaps the most dramatic example was TNS' involvement with the Rochester Topfree Seven, a group who successfully challenged a discriminatory law in New York State to gain topfreedom for women there in 1992.²¹

In the mid-1980s, Michelle Handler and some other activist women in TNS began to attack what they believed to be sexist depictions of women in magazines. Pointing to the disproportionate coverage of women in *CWS*, Handler claimed that TNS and other naturist/nudist organizations needed to present more males in their periodicals and advertisements. Moreover, the critics charged, they needed to show a greater array of body shapes, sizes, and colors. Handler's message was worth careful consideration. TNS has wanted all along to support women in naturism, but now

saw that it could be done, and perhaps should be done, in a slightly different way. Over the course of the next two or three years, *CWS*, and then *N*, would present a much more complete picture of the naturist population.

Today *N* shows naturists in all their assorted shapes, sizes, ages, and abilities. As America has gained weight, so too have the people in *N*. As naturists have aged, so too have those depicted in its premier journal. No naturist organization and no naturist magazine can claim to more accurately display the beauty and vitality, as well as the warts and scars, of naturism as TNS and *N* magazine.

Arising from the ecologically aware youth of the 1970s, TNS continues its emphasis on our natural connection to the biosphere. Beach and hot spring support groups in the Naturist Network often host clean-up days, assisting the local management agency in caring for the site. This not only helps to foster good relationships

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Lee Baxandall was passionate about life! He never undertook anything which he wouldn't commit to wholeheartedly. When he was a young man he wasn't just a Boy Scout, he was an Eagle Scout. While some successful young men met their town's mayor, Lee met the President.

Lee didn't just speak German; he would translate the works of one of Germany's great authors into English. He didn't just write for a newspaper, he wrote for the *New York Times* and founded his own publication.

When he retired he didn't set up a pension plan for his staff, he turned the company over to them. When Lee was committed to something he would let nothing get in the way of his goal.

When he was introduced to naturism he realized he simply had to share the life affirming joy of being clothes-free and helping to introduce others to the joy of nude recreation. When those freedoms were threatened by those less enlightened, he would spare no effort to defend the rights of others.

Those of us who were privileged to know him as I did for over twenty years, could not help but stand in awe of a larger than life man, who would not compromise when it came to doing what he believed was right. To be around him when he was consumed by an issue was akin to being next to a tornado.

The mark he made not just on naturism, but on countless individuals who he challenged, mentored and encouraged will be a lasting legacy for a man whose life was truly a gift to so many people.

Stephen Payne
Club Orient



Mayor Will Kleindienst, Johanna Baxandall, Stephen & Linda Payne, Architect & Council member Christopher Mills, Council member Jeanne Reller-Spurgin, Chamber of Commerce and City of Palm Springs Officials celebrate the Lee R. Baxandall Dedication ceremonies at Desert Shadows Inn Resort & Villas.

We have just heard of the demise of Lee Baxandall. We Cunninghams, speaking both for ourselves and *Naturist LIFE International*, offer our condolences to TNS and all who loved Lee.

We first became acquainted with him in the early 80s, entering into what Lee termed in a gift book inscription, a "disputatious friendship." Despite our many disagreements, our mutual respect was never diminished. Now that he truly knows the naked Truth, he is, alas, unable to share it.

We knew Lee as possessing high personal integrity, ever honest, generous and especially fair. He has been in our prayers.

Requiescat in pacem ,
Jim & Linda (Maggie) Cunningham

Though inevitably succumbing to the insidious disorder which caused his premature retirement years ago, Lee Baxandall will long remain in my memory as the premier voice for wholesome body acceptance in a 20th century American culture warped by religious extremism and commercial misogyny. I am deeply saddened that he did not live to see greater progress from all his insightful writings and strategic contributions over several decades towards advancing natural nudity and human sanity.

Lee deserves eternal gratitude well beyond naturist circles for leading such a transformative social mission, for few have the fearless intellect and sheer talent to even attempt it, much less courageously persevere as long as he did. Whenever challenged or engaged he never suffered from a lack of self-confidence, and his personal integrity always allowed him to speak from high ground. The Naturist Society provided him the ideal platform as well as a customized vehicle for expansion of his concepts.

An inspirational, thoughtful leader, he became a good friend to Lupin beginning in the mid-1980's with a series of Western Gatherings, two generously held despite the problematic aftermaths of a wildfire and an earthquake.

Ever a creative entrepreneur, he was also a fellow founder of TANR, the Trade Association for Nude Recreation, and a co-developer of the cooperative web outreach program which continues to inform a large mainstream audience of clothes-free getaway choices. He helped shape coherent, valuable public standards, as he did with every organization he supported.

His naturist publications, the beautifully illustrated World Guides and the ever informative *N Magazine*, uniquely qualified for vital shelf-space in progressive-mainstream bookstores long before the Internet emerged in the mid-90's. Until then that narrow window provided the only credible public exposure to the very existence of naturist options, an otherwise too well kept secret.

I greatly admire the way Lee has passed on the legacy of his life's work, which is worth building upon by all who admired it and him. I will forever remember and miss the special friend he was to me in good times and bad.

Glyn Stout
Lupin Lodge



Glyn Stout and Lee Baxandall enjoy a moment at Lupin Lodge.

Paths laid and footmarks trod with
no shorts above,

Or wrappings below. Not on our
beaches or around our hearts

Thanks to him.

J. Decker



with the site authorities, it also manifests a naturist interest in maintaining the integrity and health of the land.

TNS gatherings and festivals routinely offer workshops and seminars informing attendees about their relationship to the natural world. Vegetarian choices are offered at gathering and festival meals, and each gathering offers the chance to get away from the developed club grounds for a day to a local beach or hot spring. This

latter opportunity may seem like a small point, but far too many naturists forget the joys of being out in nature clothes-free, surrounded by birds and animals, and swimming in the living water of lakes and streams.

Lee Baxandall's early work in theatrical and performance arts set the tone for TNS' support of aesthetic excellence. *N* has covered many important art works and events that illustrate the themes of body

acceptance and social nudity. Articles have appeared discussing paintings, sculpture, opera, theater, performance art, literature, and cinema. TNS has supported a number of artists who have shown special talent in developing naturist themes in an aesthetically satisfying manner. TNS has sponsored workshops in art modeling, figure drawing, silk screening, watercolor painting, acting, dance, photography, and music. In 1997 and 1998 TNS even hosted clothing-optional Northwest Jazz Festivals near Seattle, Washington, featuring top jazz musicians of the region.

Baxandall Passes the Torch

Although Lee Baxandall had for a long time encouraged respect for one's own body and that of others, his own began to fail him. A long-term battle with Parkinson's Disease left him mentally alert and vigorous, it began to take its toll on him physically. In 2002, Baxandall decided to sell The Naturists, Inc. to three women who had

"Working as NAC's lobbyist in Washington, DC, required that I look first and foremost to Lee Baxandall as my mentor and critic. This was challenging, frustrating...and a delightful adventure. I learned to love and respect Lee as a titan, a bulldog, a relentless and joyous leader. He'll remain alive in memory because our dignity and freedom are the reward for having known Lee."

Scotch Pankonin

worked with him as integral parts of TNS for years: Nicky Hoffman, Judi Ditzler, and Margaret Thornton. All three respected Baxandall's work in TNS, and wished

to see his vision continued. Ditzler—with assistance from Mark Storey and others—would edit *N* magazine, Hoffman would manage the office and *N* Network, and Thornton would continue to keep track of the business and financial end of things. Baxandall would continue to provide valuable consultation and occasional magazine articles until his physical health limited his ability to do so.

TNS' largest project under the new reign was the co-publication of *The World's Best Nude Beaches and Resorts*. Mike Charles and Nick Mayhew-Smith of England's Lifestyle Press had successfully published three "coffee-table" quality guide books to nude beaches and resorts in Europe, and contacted TNS proposing that TNS and Lifestyle Press team up to co-write and co-publish an updated version of Baxandall's *World Guide to Nude Beaches and Resorts*. The latest edition of Baxandall's famous guide was still good, but the development of new resorts and a change in status of many beaches worldwide had produced a demand for a new edition. In 2007, after a year of research and travel by co-authors Nick Mayhew-Smith and Mark Storey, along with editorial work from Mike Charles, Nicky Hoffman (now Hoffman Lee), and Judi Ditzler (who had at this point left TNS to work for another firm, but continued to do editorial work on special projects), TNS and Lifestyle Press released *The World's Best Nude Beaches and Resorts* to show the world how much fun could be had on a naturist vacation in nearly any part of the globe. The guide immediately became and remains the first choice in print for those seeking information about naturist travel.

Baxandall was happy to see the years of work on the many editions of his *World Guide* continued by those with his vision. With Hoffman Lee now at the editorial helm of *N* magazine, he continued to provide consultation, articles, and a valuable historical perspective until his death on November 28, 2008. His passing is a loss to naturism around the world, as he, more than anyone else, brought both aesthetic appreciation and political savvy, along with

lightheartedness and intellectual rigor, to the quest for body acceptance and naturist freedoms.

TNS & the Future

Now well into 21st century, TNS acknowledges that naturists and non-naturists are becoming cyber-literate and that more and more people are looking to the Internet for their information and reading recreation. Although TNS remains a membership organization expressing itself primarily through the printed word and face-to-face personal interaction, TNS and *N* are responding to the call for online access.

TNS has maintained a Web site since 1996, at www.naturistsociety.com. The site has been completely re-designed several times, featuring access to *N* articles, Network contacts, Gathering and Festival information, NAC Alerts, and an online Skinny-Dipper Shop.

Today new naturist Web sites and blogs appear on a daily basis. The vast majority of these are unedited and include information and reports that are largely unverified. TNS has decided to do what it does best—producing a reliable magazine while using new technologies to further people's access to the information the orga-

nization can provide. That said, NAC has a rich Web site providing detailed information about U.S. state and Canadian provincial laws as they pertain to nudity. Its Toni Egbert Law Library is a valuable source of information for lawyers looking for information on court cases of interest to skinny-dippers. NAC's blog is also of use for public discussion on matters pertaining to naturist activism in North America.

This is where TNS stands today. Its members are loyal—retention rates stay near 80 percent—and retain much of the volunteer, grassroots spirit that helped to move issues of body-freedom out of the mid-century dark ages of corporate nudism. It is established as the leading advocate for nude use on appropriate public lands. Its innovative magazine is a model and benchmark for many naturist publications.

With all its diversity and idiosyncrasies, The Naturist Society moves ahead in a largely unified front, proclaiming still that "Body Acceptance is the Idea—Nude Recreation is the Way." Expect even more from TNS in the decades to come. **N**

