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"Keeping Our Beaches Bare"

The Art of Nude Protest!

The Boston Tea Party; the Underground Railroad; the Suffragette Movement; labor union actions for decent working conditions and decent wages; the Civil Rights marches of the '50's and 60's: Today, these are all hallowed icons of American history, viewed as protests of brave men and women for freedom and fair treatment, and against injustice. Yet, in their time, many decried these protests as dangerous, illegal acts, undermining the peace, tranquility, and stability of society. Many labeled the protesters as criminals, rabble-rousers, un-Godly, or just plain scum.

Whatever their views or politics, all Americans should recognize that part of the genius and success of our democracy is due to the ability of our citizens to freely protest what they feel are wrongs and injustices. History teaches us that the rabble-rousing agitator of today can often become the patriot of the history books. Certainly, it's often a question of who wins in the end, of who writes the history books, and of what labels they choose to apply to the various participants. But a review of American history reveals, we believe, a general trend toward an increase in freedom and liberty for the greatest number, albeit with occasional backslides and reverses.

Most recently, the Iraq war produced a spate of protest, both worldwide and in the United States. In the light of our rapid military success, should we say these protesters were wrong? Were they cowards and dreamers, or the soul-mates of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther

consciences dictate, moment to moment. We may be wrong, or misguided, in the light of the historical outcome. Yet, if we act from the highest motivation, we will have no cause for self-recrimination, even if events do not turn out as we would have hoped.



Living peace sign: John D. MacArthur State Park.

King? Can we now question whether their beliefs were sincere, or whether they were wrong in the actions they advocated? Shouldn't we wait a few years to see what the political outcome in the region is, before we judge? Posing historical counterfactuals is entertaining for some, but we can never be sure of the results if different actions had been taken. Would we be better off today if the American Revolution had never occurred, or worse off? What would America be like now if the Civil War had never occurred? We can never know for sure. All we can do, in the end, is to speak and act as our

perhaps a demonstration of Parkinson's Law of Triviality that so much should be made of the inclusion of nudity in the protest, rather than addressing the issues of life and death that lie beneath. Certainly, for naturists, for whom nudity is non-sensational, this is a matter of mixed amusement, bewilderment, and regret. Yet, the reporting on the nude protest of naturists at MacArthur Beach Park in Palm Beach reveals, we think, some understanding of the serious issues involved. ✨

The use of nudity in protest can be traced back to the Bible, where God commanded it of His prophet: "...My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and token..." (Isaiah 20: 2-4) A number of anti-Iraq-war protests, in the USA and abroad, featured nude demonstrations. In this context, nudity serves to highlight our vulnerability to circumstance, and to emphasize our communality with our fellow men and women throughout the world. We are, after all, only flesh and blood. It is



Peace activists bare all on beach

By Mark Pollio

Staff writer, Ft. Pierce Tribune

February 15, 2003

(Material from The Associated Press was used in this report.)

Palm Beach County

Unarmed and unclothed, a nudist group twisted their naked bodies into a peace sign and heart on a local beach Friday.

The event, organized by Fort Pierce resident Toni Anne "T.A." Wyner, was designed to protest the potential war with Iraq and celebrate Valentine's Day. The clothes came off of two dozen people at 11 a.m. at the John D. MacArthur State Park in North Palm Beach.

The protest mirrored similar gatherings in New York and California.

"The vulnerability of the nude body is a peace sign in and of itself," said Wyner, co-founder of Sunnier Palms Nudist Park in Fort Pierce. "When nudity is combined with another form of expression, it is protected speech."

That free speech doesn't come easy. Wyner and other naturists have been at odds with state park officials and law enforcement since they started holding nude gatherings on the beach almost 20 years ago.

For years, the group has put on nude plays at the beach. The plays, written by Wyner, tell stories about what nude beaches used to be like in Florida years ago. Wyner said MacArthur, for whom the park is named, used to go skinny-dipping all the time.

Several times police arrested actors and actresses involved in the plays for violating a park rule banning nudity. Every charge brought against a nudist involved in these group performances has later been dropped, Wyner said.

"In every area of the park no individual shall expose the human, male or female genitals, pubic area, the entire buttocks or female breast below the top of the nipple, with less than a fully opaque covering," the rule states.

This year, the DEP filed for a temporary restraining order to stop the



performance. Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Donald Middlebrooks granted a preliminary injunction overturning the restraining order.

Middlebrooks also ruled the state could put up signs warning other visitors about the stripping sunbathers. The state instead put up a semi-sheer screen on three sides of the site. There were no arrests this year.

Wyner said she would continue to hold nude events at the beach. State officials said they would continue to enforce the rule.

"As long as the rule remains as it is, this will keep happening," said Kathalyn Gaither, a spokeswoman for the Department of Environmental Protection. "As far as a rule change, they would have to request one."

Marilyn Weil, who brought her three grandchildren to the beach Friday morning, said she was warned about the protest before she reached the beach.

"It's a little bizarre, but it's freedom of expression," Weil said. "I'd rather have them see that than a bunch of dead bodies on the television screen, which is what we'd see if we bomb Iraq." ☆



Protesters bare all against war in Iraq

By Paul Lomartire

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

February 15, 2003

North Palm Beach

Tossing aside their signs – No Iraq War – and then their shorts, T-shirts and bikinis, 23 protesters lay in the sand to form a peace symbol at the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park.

“Being nude is being vulnerable, and that’s the message of peace,” T.A. Wyner said Friday. Wyner, a veteran Fort Pierce naturist, helped organize the Living Nude Peace Sign. On Thursday, a U.S. District court ruled that the nude protest was legal at the public beach.

Park rangers watched impassively from a couple of hundred yards away as Wyner built the peace symbol with bare bodies in the rough sand. Park employees spent 90 minutes Friday morning putting up a U-shaped screen to shield other beach visitors from the protesters, but Wyner purposely positioned the peace symbol, which included 15 men and eight women, on the open beach.

“This demonstration has now become not only anti-war,” she said, “but free speech rights, too. Today we celebrate the First Amendment.”

The Valentine’s Day protest was a field trip for nudists attending the four-day Mid-Winter Naturist Festival at the Sunsport Gardens Nudist Resort in Loxahatchee. About 350 naturists from around North America are at the annual gathering, which ends Tuesday.

“This protest is important,” said Morley Schloss, one of Sunsport’s owners

“Being nude is being vulnerable, and that’s the message of peace,”

***– naturist/activist
T.A. Wyner***

and a peace symbol participant. “I think this protest is cumulative with all the others and will do some good because most people around the world are opposed to a war only to get our hands on the second largest oil supply.”

The protesters created two versions of a peace sign. Surrounded by TV and newspaper photographers, they were face up for European papers and face down for U.S. papers.

Larry Fassalino, vacationing from

Long Island, happened upon the protest by accident and decided to strip for the anti-war cause.

“Hey, I never got naked before in public,” said the 46-year-old contractor, “but I just had to do it. I agree with them. And this is still the best country in the world because we get to do this.”

Jim Skinner, vacationing from New Hampshire, went to the protest with his wife, Barbara, and daughter, Jessica. But the Vietnam veteran, who’s a naturist vacationing at Sunsport Gardens, didn’t become part of the peace symbol.

“I could not do that to our troops,” he said, “but I came to support my wife and daughter’s right to do it.”

Jessica, 24, a Chino, Calif., art teacher, was the youngest protester. “It’s my generation that’s going to war,” she said. “Maybe if people see this in their community, maybe they’ll realize the war isn’t a good idea.”

The nude protesters were all proud to make a statement they hope will be seen on the Internet and in newspapers around the world.

“I just wish I didn’t have such a big gut,” lamented Fassalino, the accidental nudist. ✨

Federal court stops Florida from blocking nude anti-war activists

The Associated Press

13 February 2003

A federal court judge Thursday barred the State of Florida from trying to block plans by a group to gather in a state park, strip nude and form a peace symbol with their bodies in protest of a U.S. war on Iraq.

In his 11-page order, U.S. District Judge Donald M. Middlebrooks wrote

that “nude overtly political speech in the form of a ‘living nude peace symbol’ is expressive conduct well within the ambit of the First Amendment.”

Middlebrooks also ruled, however, that the state could erect signs to notify the public that the protest would be taking place, or it could put screens around the demonstrators.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Florida went to court in defense of a

naturist and a videographer who planned to record the nude demonstration.

The demonstration is scheduled for Friday morning at John D. MacArthur Beach State Park on Singer Island, north of West Palm Beach.

Similar demonstrations have taken place in recent weeks in New York and California. ✨