

BEACH BUZZ

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“Keeping Our Beaches Bare”

Naturist leaders meet, support clothing optional beaches

What do Apollo Beach, Playalinda Beach, Wreck Beach, Fire Island, Sandy Hook (Gunnison) Beach, Hippie Hollow, Bonny Dune, San Onofre, Little Beach, Black’s Beach, Haulover Beach, Hanlan’s Beach, Sauvie Island, and The Ledges have in common? They are all existing traditional clothing optional beaches with active, organized naturist “friends of” groups.

What do Honeymoon Island, Moonstone Beach, MacArthur (Airforce) Beach, Honokohau Beach, Higbee Beach, Smuggler’s Cove, Paradise Beach, Cape Cod, Navarre Beach, Spence Hot Springs, Asateague National Seashore, Jones Beach, and so many others, have in common? They were once traditional clothing optional beaches without active naturist “friends of” groups – and, they no longer exist as such.

(This is why the nonprofit educational organization called Beach Education Advocates for Culture, Heath, Environment & Safety Foundation Institute, was created.)

Once a year the Board of Governors of B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation and its Chapter groups come together for its Annual Meeting. This was its Fourth Annual Meeting and was opened to other national naturist organizations, and leaders of “friends of” beach groups, whose primary focus is nude recreation on public lands throughout North America.

Today, our remaining traditional clothing optional beach areas are experiencing record crowds, and international trends are showing dramatic increases in the demand for nude travel and tourism. The Miami-Dade Park

Department recently announced that Haulover visitors have been as high as 1.6 million in 2000, with an estimated 85% of beach visitors using the clothing optional beach. But a plethora of anti-nudity legislation at every level of government is causing a loss of public land sites and dark clouds are gathering over the future of private nudist clubs. How? By making “mere nudity” a serious criminal sexual offense and stating that it has a “*negative secondary effect harmful to the public’s health, safety, welfare and morals.*”

The time for naturists to seriously focus on the status of our clothing optional beaches, hot springs and lakeshore sites is long overdue. The time for action is NOW.

“We can no longer ignore the fact that 20 years of work by national naturist/nudist organizations have not been effective in securing our beaches,” stated **Tom Chittenden**, founder and first president of South Florida Free Beaches, currently living in Key West and serving on the Board of Florida Keys Naturists.

Michael Kush, SFFB President remarked; “We want to meet representatives from other successful naturist beach groups in order to compare problems, and find solutions for sustaining our groups as well as keeping our respective beaches.” He then added, “Also, hearing from beach and park managers and elected officials helps us understand their needs and concerns, and they can hear ours. That’s very important.”

This meeting limited the discussions to four specific topics:

- Keeping Beach Groups Alive and Relevant
- Mentoring & Managing Clothing

Optional Beaches

- Understanding the Value of Clothing Optional Beaches
- Mainstreaming Clothing Optional Beaches & Naturism

It was the special presentation by *William Martin*, President of Naturist Christians, on how naturists could utilize the Florida Religious Freedom Restoration Act as one means to secure naturist legal rights, that captured the imagination of every participant (*See article, page 11*). His was a new and novel strategy for a persistent problem. We agreed to meet again in the near future to continue the discussion with a small group of legally savvy naturists. We will need to locate lawyers to help form the proper strategy for a future test case that would surely derive from a civil disobedient act such as holding a nude baptism at a public beach in a city or county with an anti-nudity ordinance.

“Right now, naturists have no legal protection from government prohibitions from misdirected, overbroad laws...nude nightclub dancers at least can claim freedom of artistic expression under the First Amendment,” proclaimed **Richard Mason**, head of South Florida Free Beaches Legal Defense/Political Action Fund. “A revision in Florida state law could close Haulover’s naturist beach practically overnight, and even threaten private Florida nudist resorts.”

Paul Bowman, author of the book, *Nakedness and the Bible*, who attended from Western Canada, was the perfect adjunct to Martin’s talk about naturists having an authentic basis for claiming religious freedom since nudity is not condemned, but actually honored in scripture.



B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation purposely began its work slowly, not only to get its operational bearings, but also to allow other naturist organizations to get to know what direction its mission would take. But now it's time to increase its profile and expand its programs in order to stop the unbearable and unnecessary loss of our beaches and constant threats to naturist/nudist recreation and lifestyle.

B.E.A.C.H.E.S. has a 3 stage, 5-year plan. The "Save Our Beaches" plan was outlined to the leaders and they were asked to consider signing on and beginning the process of supporting the groups that mentor clothing optional beaches, while training new beach activist leaders. The plan has been in the works for a few years using Haulover Beach as the test site for executing the management plan to demonstrate the value of designated public clothing optional beaches. Activist training in legal and political matters for leaders within South Florida Free Beaches, Central Florida Naturists, and a number of other non-landed club leaders, has been ongoing in earnest since 1993, mostly in Florida.

This five-year plan is open to revisions, and its programs are flexible enough to custom fit the special needs of individual beach sites. B.E.A.C.H.E.S. is asking other naturist groups that use public lands to join them in a coalition and take the lead in saving our beaches with the support of other national naturist organizations.

"I think of this campaign as a way to create a viable and sustainable source of revenue to do what is required to keep our clothing optional sites legal, safe and secure. This can only be done by keeping our 'friends of' groups alive and relevant," stated **Shirley Mason**, author of the "Save Our Beaches" campaign and executive director-secretary of B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation Institute.

"Real change in society starts from the bottom up, not from the top down," Shirley Mason concluded. "In the case of our beaches, it is the volunteer beach groups that are the key, with their sheer love of their piece of heaven and devotion to maintaining the struggle. It is they who need and deserve the most attention and support the national organizations can give. Clothing optional beaches are the

best source of new members any organization could have. That is why B.E.A.C.H.E.S. was formed – to help organize, set consistent and high standards for our clothing optional beaches, and to make all nude recreation organizations strong and powerful for the mutual survival of nude recreation everywhere."

Marion Hagans, board member of B.E.A.C.H.E.S., known for her organizational skills in planning events for single nudists, commented: "Let's make the beach-going public as well as the government aware of the value of these areas. Responsible leadership *by naturists and for naturists* has to be demonstrated at these sites. We must talk to each other and organize something long lasting for the future."

Nicky Hoffman, Administrative Director of The Naturist Society, noted: "Meetings such as this one, and TNS's Festivals and Gatherings, are of great value in bringing together concerned naturists, comparing notes, and making real plans for the future. TNS remains committed to giving its support to all groups advancing the cause of naturism and body acceptance, and it's always great for me to hear what local group leaders think."

The 480-room Radisson-Deauville Resort on Miami Beach was the site for the business portion of this gathering. It is also the prospective site for a late 2004 international naturist event called "The Celebrated Nude" that is in the early planning stages. B.E.A.C.H.E.S. wanted its Board and leaders to see and experience the facility and get their opinion of whether they would support sponsoring a buyout for such an event. The resort management wanted to show their appreciation that we selected their resort for our meeting and they sponsored our Friday poolside welcome reception with a beautifully presented tower of foods, wines and non-alcoholic beverages. The weather was perfect and so was the setting next to the beach and ocean. This was classic Miami Beach paradise.

But Naturists can't be together in a beautiful setting too long before the desire arises to get *au naturel*. The weather Saturday was a total washout for the beach and for the officials who were set

to speak to us there. But we still wanted to have our SFFB Volunteer Appreciation Picnic, and besides, where do you put a 36 foot-long sub sandwich? So the picnic was moved to the Pelican Restaurant on the pier at the Newport Beach Resort in the City Sunny Isles – still in view, at least, of Haulover's Naturist Beach. The sandwich was an impressive sight and fed the entire group with plenty left over.

Sunday, the rain broke long enough to get out to Haulover Beach. **Corey Mangold** and his technical assistant, **John Peltier**, interviewed beach goers and naturist leaders for "Nudes in the News," a live web broadcast and a future naturist video highlighting the best clothing optional and nudist venues. Corey is President of the International Naturists Association, a relatively new organization whose mission is to bring nude recreation to the next generation of young adults and their families. INA has almost exclusively used the power of the Internet to reach its target market, which has worked extremely well. Their site (www.ClothesFree.com) averages approximately 90,000 hits each day and the INA has a growing paid membership which averages 12,000 new members annually.

Saturday evening we actually dressed up just enough to have a formal five-course banquet and meeting. The topic and scheduled speakers discussed the first joint venture that would include naturist involvement for a concession operation for food service and rentals (chairs, umbrellas, skates and bikes) at Haulover Beach. The Park Department has put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to award a five-year permit to an experienced and financially capable concessionaire. B.E.A.C.H.E.S. plans on bidding on this concession in partnership with experienced professionals in these service areas.

The following beach leaders were voted to the Board of Governors of B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation:

David Gibbon (Central Florida Naturist – representing Playalinda and Apollo Beaches, FL);

Michael Kush (South Florida Free Beaches/FNA – representing Haulover Beach, FL);

Claudette Richards (Friends of Mazo



Beach – representing Mazo Beach, WI)

Judy Williams (Wreck Beach Preservation Society – Vancouver, BC)

The following former Governors voluntarily resigned, but will now be serving on B.E.A.C.H.E.S.' Professional Advisory Council:

Lynn (Arnett) Maurine – Travel & Tour Consultant (personal reasons)

Gons Nachman – Attorney-at-Law (moving out of country)

Bruce Frendahl – Architect (indefinite

leave of absence)

Special thanks to our SFFB volunteers, **Angela, Gladys, Claudia and Juan (AJ), Heather, Ted and Martin**. They prepared dinner for the B.E.A.C.H.E.S Board of Governors business meeting and a full breakfast for the entire group on Saturday and Sunday. Their help was invaluable. And a hearty thanks of appreciation to **Bob Hoadley**, owner of the **Pelican Pier Restaurant**. Bob announced at the Saturday banquet that he is so impressed

with the naturists and our commitment that he was donating the food he prepared for the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic.

We thank the several beach clubs from Canada to Brazil who sent their best wishes and encouragement for success to B.E.A.C.H.E.S. but were unable to send their representatives. We welcome their participation next year at approximately the same time. ☆