

BEACH BUZZ

Fall 2003

Volume 3, Number 6

a publication of B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation and its Chapters
view more Beach Buzz articles online by clicking here

"Keeping Our Beaches Bare"

Candidate Foley seeks to exploit a new nude issue

Congressman Attempts to "Shame" Former ASA President Over Sales of Nude Videos

By Bob Morton

Executive Director,

Naturist Action Committee

Bob Morton is an electrical engineer who enjoys painting and writing. He and his wife Christine have three children, Robert, Becky and Charles. The entire Morton family were plaintiffs in a NAC-supported lawsuit to return the rights of parents who wish to bring their children with them to Hippie Hollow, a clothing optional public park near Austin, Texas. Bob has testified before various state legislative committees on behalf of naturists, and has been chairman of NAC since 1997. The following article originally appeared in the NAC August Newsletter.

Using the same sort of innuendo, inflammatory hyperbole and politically motivated disregard for the truth that marked his alarmed reaction to nude summer camps for the school-age sons and daughters of American nudists, Congressman Mark Foley (R-Florida), has found a new focus amid what some military analysts might call "a target-rich environment."

Currently at the center of Foley's crosshairs is Walt Zadanoff, a former president of the American Sunbathing Association (ASA). ASA changed its name ten years ago to become the American Association for Nude Recreation (AANR).

Zadanoff operates a small marketing company and a web site through which he sells, among other things, European naturist videos. Included are tapes that feature some of the various pageants European naturists stage from time to time.

Foley claims "a local nudist" faxed him information about Zadanoff's site.

While that story is of dubious veracity, it allowed Foley to conduct a renewed witch hunt without appearing to have been the one initiating it.

Now Foley has pilloried Zadanoff for selling videos of pageants involving the school-age sons and daughters of European naturists. Of course, the congressman was characteristically more colorful in a written statement he sent to the St. Petersburg Times.

The Times quotes Foley as writing, "These videos are nothing more than a fix for pedophiles. They serve young children on a platter for America's most depraved."

So, are the videos offered for sale by Zadanoff to be considered child pornography? Likely not, says the State Attorney for the Florida county where Zadanoff lives. Pasco-Pinellas State Attorney Bernie McCabe has said publicly that the video sales don't appear to break any law.

Repeating a familiar pattern, Rep. Foley has nevertheless asked Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to investigate. Bush has assigned the matter to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Unsurprisingly, Foley's aides have attempted to tie the recent brouhaha into the nude youth camp imbroglio from which the lawmaker had to make a partial retreat. They admit that their goal is more to "shame" Zadanoff than to see him punished.

AANR has responded to this latest attack by decrying Zadanoff's marketing descriptions that focus on the ages of the children, mostly girls, and on little else. AANR spokespersons have been quick to distance the organization from Zadanoff, pointing out that his tenure as president ended in 1992, a year before the organization began sponsoring nude youth camps. AANR also demanded that

Zadanoff remove links from his web site to AANR's site. AANR removed its own links to Zadanoff's site approximately a year and a half ago.

According to Zadanoff, the videos in question include no sexual content, no provocative posing and no genital closeups. What they do include are images of kids, nude ones, sometimes arrayed across a stage or platform in customary pageant format.

It's a foreign and unfamiliar image to naturists in the U.S. today, but the ASA and its clubs and regions used to operate pageants of all sorts. It was not so long ago that images from beauty pageants, "royalty" pageants and various novelty pageants regularly tramped across the pages of ASA's venerable house organ, the Bulletin.

Looking at those images now from the yellowed newsprint pages of an old Bulletin, they seem somehow foreign and unfamiliar, not unlike today's pictures from European pageants.

ASA abandoned its nude pageants in the early 1980s, about the same time The Naturist Society was getting a toehold in North America. TNS recognized from its beginnings that competitive pageants were a poor fit for its message of universal body acceptance, and pageants have never been a part of TNS events.

Perhaps as we look through an old Bulletin and wince as we come across the smiling finalists in 1974's Miss Nude Chubby contest, we realize how much the whole idea of nude pageants has become an artifact from other days and other places. In that light, the pageant videos sold by Zadanoff are an anachronism, at least among North American naturists.

The issue of children and how best to protect them has become a national social and political hysteria. Naturists have



learned that certain individuals and groups will attack them through their children. In that context, Zadanoff has become a pawn in the political campaign of Mark Foley.

Zadanoff himself bears responsibility for the unsavory way in which he has marketed the videos, but the shame that Candidate Foley seeks to attach to Walt Zadanoff must not be allowed to adhere to family-friendly naturism.

Ultimately at stake may be the right of naturists to document and celebrate the role of families with children - or to include them at all. ✨