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# SAN DIEGO NUDIST CLUB TARGETED BY RELIGIOUS ZEALOT AND LOSES SOME PARTY SITES

## PLANS FOR NUDIST PARTIES RUN INTO A FLURRY OF OPPOSITION, SANTEE, ESCONDIDO ASKED FOR TOUGH LAWS

By Elizabeth Fitzsimons UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER February 25, 2005

Planning roller-skating and swimming parties may soon become more difficult for a small, all-ages nudist club.

Events scheduled for a pool in Escondido and a roller rink in Santee were canceled by those businesses this week after the club, called Naturally California, came into the sight of a Christian activist and newsletter author.

The James Hartline Report beseeched its readers and city officials to pressure Escondido's Iceoplex and Santee's Skate Land to cancel events booked by Naturally California, describing the group's activities as perverted and despicable.

"These are businesses that are catering to families and children. They should not be profiting off of nudity," Hartline said.

Hartline said he would continue his assault on Naturally California. Hartline was described in San Diego News Notes, an independent conservative newspaper that focuses on Catholic issues, and by various publications and Web sites as an "ex-con", an "ex-drug addict," and an "ex-gay, Christian activist who is battling AIDS."

He has rallied protests against a gay event at the San Diego Sports Arena and a clerk at a Target store who was wearing what he considered a shirt that was too revealing, among other things. He also testified he was abused as a child.

"I take it very personal when I know that children are being exposed to pornography or anything like that," he said. "Any pedophile could go in there potentially and be around these kids."

"Any adult who has the audacity to claim this is healthy for kids can't possibly understand a child doesn't have the maturity or wherewithal to process nudity."

The 100-member club, whose members include adults and children, has been holding member-only nude skating and swimming parties and whale-watching trips since it was established in 1999. The group's Web site lists regular pizza parties in Rancho Bernardo and Carmel Valley for which members are clothed while meeting prospective new members.



James Hartline (left) and Brian Spence (right)

"I want to point out that we're not alone. We're one small nudist club," said founder Brian Spence, "But by no means are we unique. This happens all over the country by thousands of people. We've been targeted by this one religious activist."

Even so, Hartline's friend from church, Jeff McGreevy, took the matter to the city councils in Escondido and Santee on Wednesday night and asked for tougher ordinances on nudity.

Hartline said an outraged Santee Mayor Randy Voepel had called him in response to the idea of the planned parties.

"I'm always very, very nervous about anything that has the potential of vice or negative impact on children," Voepel said.

Santee council members' reaction ranged from mild guffaws to concern, according to its mayor.

McGreevy said he "told them I thought it was disgusting, I thought it was illegal."

A party planned for April 24 at Santee's Skate Land was canceled by the business after a visit from sheriff's deputies, Voepel said.

"The guy did what I consider was the right thing," Voepel said.

"I don't feel it's my duty to be the moral police. But nude roller-skating with kids is not something I would want to encourage at all."

Escondido police Lt. David Mankin said he consulted with the District Attorney's Office and the City Attorney and determined that no laws were being violated at the Iceoplex, which has two ice-skating rinks, an indoor pool and a gym.

Mankin said he then visited the Iceoplex to confirm that parties had indeed been held there, but the manager told him the next one, scheduled for March 13, had been canceled.

City Councilwoman Marie Waldron said she received several e-mails complaining about the nude events.

"To me, we just see this ongoing degradation of values in our country. At what point do we say we don't want to tolerate it anymore?" Waldron said.

"To me, we don't want to have that in Escondido, period."

Naturally California, which describes itself as a "non-landed nudist club," has asked for help from its parent organization, the American Association for Nude Recreation in Kissimmee, Fla.

Carolyn Hawkins, a spokesperson for AANR, said the association would continue to follow the situation and to support the local club. Members of Naturally California come from every political and religious background and include grandparents, families and singles, Spence said, and follow a principle that they have a right to enjoy nudity as long as it doesn't offend others.

The group, he said, would continue with its planned events, which include nude whale-watching through Helgren's Sportfishing in Oceanside.

"That is a private charter," said Helgren's manager Don Surowiec. "The only thing I can tell you is, it's all perfectly legal. We wouldn't let them do anything if it wasn't legal."

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## **SAN MARCOS CITY COUNCIL TO VOTE ON NUDITY BAN**

North County Times Serving San Diego and Riverside Counties - February 21, 2005 By: BEN FRUMIN - Staff Writer

SAN MARCOS ---- Your body may be beautiful, but showing too much of it in San Marcos could land you in a baggy jail uniform instead.

The City Council will consider a law tonight, at the request of the Sheriff's Department, that would ban nudity, as well as urination and defecation on public property in San Marcos.

The 42-year-old city of 67,500 has no existing ordinance banning that behavior, making it nearly impossible for law enforcement officials to punish or prevent it.

While public nudity, urination and defecation aren't growing problems, "it does happen and it's extremely frustrating for us ... that we don't have those enforcement tools available," said patrol Sgt. Rich Williams.

Councilwoman Pia Harris-Ebert said Monday that the city needs the ordinance so that the Sheriff's Department's hands aren't tied.

State law bans willful and lewd public exposure, but local officials have said California's bar is too high to punish San Marcos offenders.

Violation of the proposed law would carry a fine of at least \$1,000, up to six months in jail, or both.

"These local ordinances are very powerful enforcement tools for us," Williams said.

Naked people in public places can be an offensive nuisance to residents "while they're trying to have a good, wholesome time with their family," Williams said.

City officials have said that people who urinate or defecate in public places pose a significant health risk to others.

The law could be applied to problems like one that San Marcos Elementary School faced last year, when soccer players and spectators who used a dirt field behind the school regularly treated the campus as their trash can and toilet.

The school's head custodian said last March that he sometimes had to hose urine off slides and scoop feces out of the sandbox.

The law would not only ban exposure, urination and defecation on public property but also on private property visible from any public land.

The proposed law basically defines a person as nude if he or she is exposing any body part that would be covered by a small bikini or Speedo swimsuit. It would also be illegal to expose any device or costume that covers those body parts, but realistically mimics their appearance.

The nudity prohibition would not apply to children younger than 10, women breast-feeding or theatrical performances.

The new law would take effect 30 days after council adoption, which would be March 23 if the ordinance were approved tonight.

Quips and questions about teens' skimpy clothing and emergency biological urges on the golf course were traded between council members and city employees when the proposed law was introduced at the council's Feb. 8 meeting.

Tonight's meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1 Civic Center Drive.

Also on the agenda is a proposed amendment to the plan that regulates development in the 3,466-home San Elijo Hills community. The change would allow 143 already approved homes to be built on flat pads instead of split-level foundations so they'll blend in better with their sloping surroundings and avoid sewer problems.

The city's Planning Commission approved the proposed amendment earlier this month.

## CONSERVATIVES ON MEAN STREAK OVER NUDISTS

February 26, 2005

I can't stop thinking about those shunned nudists. Without tears, let's peel back this loopy onion, layer by layer.

As you'll recall, Wednesday brought the first pungent whiff of SCANDAL. Word started ricocheting around that a group of nudists was planning an ice-skating party next month at Escondido's Iceoplex.

My first reaction was Brrrrr! My second reaction was Ouch! My third reaction was Hoax!

As it turned out, the bizarre rumor partially was true.

As they had done without incident for the past five years, members of Naturally California, a group of about 100 nudists from around the region, planned to disport themselves at the Iceoplex next month.

The party, however, wasn't going to be held at one of the steam-spewing power facility's two skating rinks. Rather, it was at the adjacent indoor pool in the Iceoplex's Fitness & Aquatic Center.

Instead of skinning their hides on freezing ice, the nude revelers would be skinny-dipping in warm water.

What a relief.

By Thursday, the pool party was torpedoed.

James Hartline, a fire-breathing Christian moralist with a penchant for rallying protests, generated the initial stink.

Then Escondido Councilwoman Marie Waldron, a state Assembly candidate, picked up the scent and started baying to the press.

For Waldron, the splashing nudies were political manna, an occasion to agitate hard-core Republicans by condemning "the ongoing degradation of values in our country."

Earlier in the week, she had pushed the same sort of hot button by announcing her desire to force the public library to install software on all its computers to prevent access to sexually explicit material.

Quicker than you can spell F-A-M-I-L-Y V-A-L-U-E-S, Iceoplex, influenced by its apprehensive landlord, canceled the private clothes-free party. (The same scenario played out in Santee, where the same nudists had scheduled a roller-skating event.)

Now, if you promise to keep an open mind, I'm going to tell you why I can't stop looking at this story.

Most every workday for the past five years or so, I drive a few blocks down Tulip Street to the Iceoplex, walk through the front door, hang a left, say hello to Lisa, and walk back toward the pool.

Then, in the company of individuals of all ages, I take my clothes off.

Now don't panic.

I reveal myself as God made me in the confines of the men's dressing room. And my natural state is brief, just long enough to tug on workout clothes or a swimsuit.

As you can see, I'm biased in favor of the Iceoplex, which bluenoses have tarnished as a watery den of iniquity allowing activities that cannot be "tolerated," to borrow the word of Waldron, a pro-business conservative.

In an ideal world, Iceoplex would have told the moral vigilantes to go pump sand at Blacks Beach.

However, I can imagine Hartline gathering an assortment of like-minded people to picket the Iceoplex.

Talk about a big chill in the business climate.

Having said all this, I'm still not inclined to serve as a cheerleader on the nude bandwagon.

On Naturally California's Web site, one can download a videotape showing naked people enjoying personal watercraft or snowboarding. (Now just from the perspective of personal safety, this conduct is something you shouldn't try, even at home.)

More important, the participation of children, offspring of adult nudists, makes me queasy.

Maybe I feel sorry for the kids – from an aesthetic point of view.

What we're looking at here is a cultural polarity that is as American as apple pie. We always have been home to puritans with righteous streaks. We always have been home to utopian free-thinkers.

The former tend to wear lots of dark clothes; the latter tend to wear as little as possible.

Most of us – at least I pray it's most of us – are suspended in between the two poles. I may be uncomfortable with the whole nudist ethos, but I'm more uncomfortable with the mean-spirited persecution of people who appear to be fun-loving and law-abiding. And in this dismaying case, I resent most of all the vilification of a wholesome exercise center, my nomination for the coolest in North County.

*Logan Jenkins can be reached at (760) 737-7555 or by e-mail at [logan.jenkins@uniontrib.com](mailto:logan.jenkins@uniontrib.com).*

# MORE ABOUT THE NATURALLY CALIFORNIA'S LOSS OF NUDE RECREATION VENUES IN SAN DIEGO

This story is evolving further each day, Feel free to email us at [scna@socalnaturist.org](mailto:scna@socalnaturist.org) with your own opinions and we'll publish a representative sample in the May Newsletter edition.

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Published Thursday, March 24, 2005

## Nudity the least of our kids' worries

By: JIM TRAGESER - Staff Writer



**JIM TRAGESER**

A couple weeks back in this same space, your loyal correspondent (that's me) took a somewhat less-than-gentle swipe at Escondido Councilwoman Marie Waldron for siccing the cops on a private, clothing-optional swim event at the Iceoplex.

Since then, the good councilwoman and myself have engaged in a bit of phone tag (never quite catching each other, but leaving messages on each other's machines) in which Ms. Waldron has repeatedly asserted that

her sole purpose in seeking to shut down the nekkid swimathons was to protect the children at the event. That she was never concerned with what adults did in private.

That she is certain that my column was simply based on my misunderstanding her role in all this; that surely she and I can both agree that children are harmed by a clothing-optional environment. While I certainly accept the councilwoman's good intentions, the fact remains that no, I can't agree that nudity harms children ---- because there is, to be blunt, simply no evidence that it does.

In fact, there is a substantial body of research that suggests children raised in clothing-optional environments have healthier attitudes toward their self-image and sex than those raised in more prudish ones. That such children delay sexual activity longer, and are less likely to engage in promiscuous behavior. That they're less likely to develop anorexia or bulimia.

There are numerous studies that show the incidence of sexual crime is significantly lower in clothing-optional environments than Western society at large. Whether we're talking "primitive" societies of the Third World where folks have yet to catch on to our prudishness, or free-wheeling back-to-nature hippie communes, clothing-optional cultures have created a healthier appreciation of the human body, seeing it as beautiful in ways beyond sex.

Let's be honest here ---- look at the recent news reports of molestations in our community. Where have they occurred? Invariably in places where the children and adults were both fully clothed at the time the molestations began ---- in our schools and churches, not exactly bastions of public nudity. It would seem that our children may, in fact, be safer at a nudist colony than at Bible school.

I believe Waldron is honestly worried about our kids, but she needs to focus on the real dangers facing them. If she'll take the time to look, the traffic conditions outside Escondido's schools will raise her moral righteousness far more than a bunch of skinny dippers. Helping the police acquire the resources they need to implement some meaningful and effective traffic control near the schools of Escondido would be proof positive of her concern.

She might also take the lead in providing more public parks in one of the most park-poor communities in the county. New initiatives to provide much-needed recreational opportunities and employment programs for our youth would also be welcome, as would more gang interdiction efforts.

Gangs, drugs and dangerous driving all represent far greater threats to our children than seeing a bunch of wrinkled skin ever will.

Contact staff writer Jim Trageser at (760) 740-5424 or [jtrageser@nctimes.com](mailto:jtrageser@nctimes.com).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR RECEIVED ON THE ISSUE

Some of these letters appeared in the San Diego Union newspaper or were posted on the web site of Channel 10 News at <http://forums.ibsys.com/viewmessages.cfm?sitekey=sand&Forum=224&Topic=11644>

Dear Editor:

Mr. Hairline's fear of nudity causing actions of pedophilia should cause him to look at where these crimes are most committed. In the homes, churches and schools, by people wearing clothes.

A public official's fear, caused by ignorance and bias, is not reason enough to deny parents the right to raise their children as they see fit.

**Richard Mason, Florida Nudist Association**

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Dear Editor:

Is it a legitimate use of the government's police power to force one person's religious beliefs on the rest of the people?

There is no empirical or clinical evidence that suggests that children who are raised as nudists or in an atmosphere of family and/or social nudity suffer any ill effects. Most of the "evidence", to the contrary, can be traced back to the myths perpetrated by Sigmund Freud (who only examined people with sexual hang-ups for his studies.) Naturists/Nudist have been around for a long time. They have raised their families with a healthy attitude about nudity, body acceptance and sex. Children who grow-up in such an environment usually turn out to be well-adjusted adults.

**Allen Baylis, Attorney at Law**

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Dear Editor:

I am not surprised that a victim of child abuse sees demons everywhere. People, who see us nudists as abusers, need to get their minds out of the gutter. I think it's right that the safety of children is a primary interest of the public, but when those concerns are shown to be baseless, it's time to leave us alone. It's appalling how many people think they know what goes on at our activities, even though they've never been to one. It's not difficult to enter and give us a surprise inspection. We have nothing to hide.

**Lloyd J.**

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Dear Editor:

It saddens me to hear that people ban something based on their prejudice rather than evidence. I have kids, I would be happy for them to spend a week at a nudist

site, however I could not say the same about a church run camp. That is not to say that anything would happen at a church camp, however it is to say that if anything was to happen at either place, I know that the nudist camp would be more swift to deal with it and would not cover it up.

**"Boddish"**

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Dear Editor:

More women are taking off their clothes in public these days. Everyone remembers Janet Jackson and her "wardrobe malfunction" at the Super Bowl halftime show. Forty million people saw her bare her breast. Almost every night, Howard Stern gets smiling women to strip for his national TV program. Even college girls are undressing for pornographers who pay them a few dollars. They say they get a good deal when they show skin for money to pay for books and tuition.

America is turning into one big nudist colony. Who's responsible? Some say it's pornographers like Howard Stern. Others accuse Hollywood and Playboy magazine. The naked truth, however, lies in large numbers of willing and available women who think they're doing nothing wrong. Where are their mothers?

Mothers must accept responsibility for daughters who trade birthrights of innocence for bowls of soup. Pandering to male hormones is no way to bring up a lady. Shame on them. Exposing breasts, bellies and legs is a recipe for disaster. Nakedness does titillate. Men do spend a few dollars for dirty magazines and porno movies. Some look at low-cut pants walking down the street. When hormones are gone, however, so is the man.

Wise women want more than turning heads and wolf whistles. Their men spend more than a few dollars and they don't bare breasts, bellies and legs. Actually, they cover them up. God-fearing mothers taught them how chastity attracts and virtue builds lifetime love stories. Captured by wholesomeness and faithfulness their men dedicate entire lives. They pay medical bills, dental bills, college educations for children and a lot more. Crow's feet and stretch marks don't seem to matter.

Foolish girls don't have fidelity to offer. They wander aimlessly in the world of single soccer moms and complain about dead beat dads.

**Darrell Watkins, Kelseyville**

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Dear Editor:

This is one Escondido nudist who will most certainly NOT be voting for Ms. Waldron for anything she runs for. I believe that this is an attempt to garner more attention and free air time in her quest to become a member of the State Assembly.

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**Scotty**

Dear Editor:

I worry about this anti-nudism trend I am seeing in San Diego County. The county has been among the most nudism-friendly areas in the country for decades.

Wholesome family nudism doesn't harm children. If anything it helps them to grow up more comfortable with their bodies. Eating disorders are almost unheard of among children who have been raised this way. Some studies point to lower teenage pregnancy rates, as well. Children who have no personal body shame are less likely to be cowed into silence by pedophiles, who use that shame against their victims. And finally, these children learn what they are going to look like as they mature physically, which makes those awkward, embarrassing years of puberty easier to endure.

I know that some people fear that children who grow up seeing naked adults, and being seen naked by them and their peers, might more easily become the victims of pedophiles. However, the opposite is true. Nudists are very cognizant of the threat of a pedophile slipping through into their midst, and take careful precautions to help ensure that the risk is minimized. There is nothing to show that a child is any more likely to sexually abused at a nudist event than at your average church picnic.

**Greg in L.A.**

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Dear Editor:

My mother and stepfather are nudists and when I joined them as a child at nudist resorts and events, I was able to keep my clothes on if I wanted to, and there was never any pressure for me to go nude.

People wanting to join nudist organizations have to be approved, after a application is filed, (sometimes background check, and a interview, before they are able to feel interact unsupervised with other nudists.

**Neochakan**

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Dear Editor:

I would like to address the core issue, which is this zealot's opinion that pedophiles would flock to naturism.

Where pedophiles are actually congregating? They are drawn to positions of authority and trust of others children where they can use shame and leverage over the child. A family that practices naturism has no built in leverage a pedophile can use. And while sexual predators seemingly would be surrounded by prey, the truth is they work from the cloak of respectability. By and large they cannot perform those methods in a naturist setting. Nudists are trained to spot any questionable behavior (very rare) and to deal with it quickly, as in minutes. Far quicker than the months and even years the Catholic

Church or the Boy Scouts or some school districts have taken to even acknowledge they MAY have a problem.

Historically we have a fantastic record of family life and values and naturism continues to grow in popularity. Where are the scandals? Don't you think that after 60+ years of American naturism if there was anything going on the media would latch on like a dog to the bone? Who is trying to scandalize the practice and what is their agenda like?

<Name Withheld>

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Dear Editor:

Having the government of Escondido interfere with the rights of any minority to legally assemble is so troubling. I can only hope that justice will weigh the five-year record of no complaints favorably against a self-described Christian community activist. This witch-hunt is the farthest thing from the Christian values with which I grew up.

**R. C. Jones**

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Dear Editor:

DIS GUST ING!!! Nude adults with nude kids running around...yeah sounds REAL stable...perfect pedophile setup.

**Robin Lar**

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Dear Editor:

One lady who commented on here that this was a set up for pedophilia. As many others have said, the occurrence of pedophilia among naturist settings is next to zero. And the last time I checked Priest and other clergy were clothed when they accost children, parents abuse and accost their kids and others while clothed.

In Virginia, lawmakers and religious groups rode a bandwagon against nudist youth camps until they enacted a law banning nudist youth camps, to "protect the children" despite the fact there have been zero occurrences of sexual activity. Also in Virginia, 3 boys (12 to 17) at a church-run bible camp sexually assaulted several other children, all younger than 12; since reading the initial news article, that's the last I heard about it. Where are these peoples' priorities?

Leave a well-grounded group alone; chase the real bad guys.

**GL**

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Dear Editor:

The worry about pedofiles is unfounded. In 15 years as a naturist, it has been extremely rare to hear of such an individual in the naturist community. Such an individual would be quickly turfed out and would never be accepted into our community again. There are certainly many more peds in other organizations, religions and professions. We are very proud of our record and love and protect our children.

**Dave and Rhoda Fleming**

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Dear Editor:

Most who were raised in non-nudist households have some very negative feelings because they don't understand. They simply can't believe it isn't about sex, but it isn't.

Nudity isn't about exhibitionism either. It is about accepting yourself and others for the way you are. I have found that for me nude recreation is the best way to unwind from my stressful daily life. I enjoy it very much and I know it may not be for everyone but for me it has done wonders. I no longer worry about how others may look at me. I am comfortable with who I am. My whole family was raised as nudists we have many fond memories of spending true quality time together at local beaches and resorts no phones or TV to interrupt things.

How long until they decide you and your hobby have to be closed down. All in the name of decency and the common good? It doesn't sound very much like the country I was born and raised in. I thought we in America believed in the rights of the individual life liberty and the pursuit of happiness and all that. If they come for me today how long until they come for you?

**Connie Fletcher**

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Dear Editor:

We are family people that enjoy being natural. We do NOT try to force our ideas on others and would appreciate it if those that don't want to be nude to do the same. Get a life and let us live ours.

**Sophie Huklbery**

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Dear Editor:

People like mayor Randy Voepel and James Hartline make their complaints based on rumor and hearsay. They just "know" sexual activity happens at nudist gatherings because that's what the rumors say. The fact is that sexual activity is unwelcome at naturist settings with violations to rules being very rare, and I can say that from firsthand experience. When I've been to naturist resorts, the children present were running, playing, swimming, laughing, and yelling to each other. It reminded me of my childhood, doing the same things when visiting relatives at a lake. During visits to those nudist settings, I never once saw anything even remotely

sexual. People should research the facts before judging nudists in a bad light.

**M.I.**

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## **FOX-TV'S A CURRENT AFFAIR AIRS SAN DIEGO "NUDE WAR"**

Tabloid television just cannot resist a story about nudists, especially during ratings sweeps. One of the sleaziest of the shows, A Current Affair, heard about the furor caused last month by a self described "born again Christian former homosexual and HIV-positive drug addict" named James Hartline, who single handedly got the ear of the city councils in Santee, San Marcos, and Escondido and got them to ban Naturally California from renting an ice skating rink and pool facility for club use.

The 2 minute segment aired Friday April 8 in the Los Angeles market, and featured interviews with both James Hartline (who refers to himself as "Saint James") and Brian Spence, (who runs Naturally California.) We heard Spence had initially rejected doing the interview until he was informed Hartline was already on the show and Current Affair was going to air it anyway. He participated because it was important to get the nudist perspective heard, he told friends.

### **"Nudists Are All Around You"**

Bryan Spence really doesn't understand the furor. For years, his company (Naturally California) has hosted nudist events around San Diego without incident. As a matter of fact, he claims there are "thousands of nudists" in the region. According to Spence, "Walk into your local shopping mall. Stop in the center court. Take a cross section of...about 50 people. Now imagine [them] naked, talking, laughing enjoying life with their friends. That's who nudists are. We are part of your society."

### **"Public Nudity...Is Not Acceptable"**

Known as "Saint James" Hartline, he's an activist, child abuse survivor, and self-described former homosexual living with AIDS. Hartline's also not sitting idly by while Bryan Spence books nude roller-skating parties. He's fighting what he terms "sexual anarchy" with all his might. As Hartline explains, "There is such a thing as modesty. There is such a thing as decency. And my standard is that public nudity with adults [in which children are present] is not acceptable at any time."

After an initial media frenzy in February and early March that grew beyond the local media to the Internet and even to a crude joke by Jay Leno, the story seemed to be going away on its own until Current Affair got involved.