



The American Association for Nude Recreation – Western Region

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The Pioneers:

Biographies of Nudists Leaders Who Made a Difference



Lee Baxandall

(1935-2008)

**Founder of the Naturist Society
and the Free Beach Movement
in America**

NATURIST SOCIETY FOUNDER LEE BAXANDALL DIES AT 73

November 27, 2008 - The man credited with starting the modern Free Beach Movement in America and founding its national conscience, The Naturist Society, has died after a long illness.

Lee Baxandall succumbed Thanksgiving Day after fighting Parkinson's disease for the past decade.

Baxandall began his work as a naturist activist more than 30 years ago. With a background in writing and publishing, Lee's naturist passion led him in 1976 to form the Free Beaches Documentation Center, which he located in his hometown of Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Baxandall organized the Naturist Society at Elysium Fields in 1980 after numerous attempts failed to form a "beach committee" inside AANR (landed club owners feared a "free beach" alternative would hurt their membership numbers). To this day, some animosity still exists between old time AANR members and TNS for daring to split the "credible voice of reason" about nudism into two national organizations.

Yet in reality both groups have complimented each other in both focus and expertise, with TNS providing expert legal assistance to persons and clubs trying to establish or maintain the clothing optional status of beaches, rivers, lakes, and other public lands while AANR focused on supporting the 270 private resorts and nudist parks scattered across the country. The Naturist Action Committee, founded in 1990 as a non-profit adjunct to TNS, has been invaluable at defeating anti-nudity legislation at both the state level and in countless local communities. Finally admitting to Baxandall's lifetime of contributions to the nudist movement, AANR elected him to their Nudist Hall of Fame in 2005.

"Body acceptance is the idea.
Nude recreation is the way."

- Lee R. Baxandall (1935-2008)

Starting in the late 1980's, Baxandall published the first comprehensive guide to nude beaches and hot springs across America. The "Nude Guide" has been updated many times since and remains the most popular nudist publication sold in the world. TNS's quarterly publication *Nude & Natural*, started by Baxandall in 1986. Commonly referred to as "N," it is considered the most comprehensive periodical about the naturist movement in America.

The famed "nudist bridge" over Indian Trail Boulevard in Palm Springs, connecting the two halves of Desert Sun Resort, is named after Baxandall, who spent his winters there for many years to escape the bitter winters of Wisconsin.

In 2002, recognizing the inevitable effect of his declining health, Baxandall transferred ownership of The Naturist Society to three longtime associates. Current owners Nicky Hoffman Lee and Margaret Thornton have remained remarkably faithful to the vision of Lee Baxandall.

A more complete obituary will appear in *N Magazine* in its Spring 2009 issue, which is now being assembled.

SCNA joins the ownership and staff of The Naturist Society in marking, with respect and appreciation, the passing of an exceptional individual.



The Baxandall Bridge crosses Indian Trails Blvd in downtown Palm Springs.

