# The Western Sun

News from the Western Region of the American Association for Nude Recreation



# **Naturist Holidays: Celebrating Without the Stress**

How naturism's simple, authentic lifestyle helps people slow down, de-stress, and reconnect during the hectic holiday season

As the holidays approach, many of us find ourselves swept up in a whirlwind of shopping lists, travel plans, crowded stores, and social obligations. While the season is meant to be about joy, gratitude, and connection, it often ends up feeling more like a marathon of obligations than a time of rest. But for naturists, there's a refreshing antidote to the holiday rush, one rooted in simplicity, mindfulness, and authenticity.

Naturism, at its heart, is about stripping away more than just clothing. It's about removing the social layers, expectations, and stressors that weigh us down. During the holidays, that philosophy offers a powerful reminder that true celebration doesn't come from things, it comes from presence.

# Slowing Down the Season

In a culture that equates "more" with "better," naturism encourages us to do the opposite. The naturist lifestyle embraces simplicity, unplugging from the noise and focusing on what truly matters: connection with others and with ourselves. Imagine spending a quiet December morning outdoors, feeling the crisp air and the warmth of the sun, rather than battling crowds in a shopping mall. For naturists, those moments of stillness are the real gifts of the season.

### **Authentic Connection**

Naturist communities often celebrate the holidays in ways that emphasize inclusion and genuine human connection. Whether it's a small potluck at a local club, a simple bonfire under the stars, or a shared meal without pretense, these gatherings remind us that we don't need lavish décor or expensive gifts to feel fulfilled. When you're surrounded by people who value authenticity, the pressure to perform disappears, you can simply be yourself.

### Mindfulness and Gratitude

Naturism naturally encourages mindfulness. Without the distractions of materialism and artificial appearances, we become more aware of our surroundings and more grateful for the beauty in simplicity. During the holidays, that awareness can help ease anxiety and bring a deeper sense of peace. Instead of chasing perfection, perfect gifts, perfect dinners, perfect photos—we can focus on what's real and meaningful.

### Reconnecting with Nature and Self

Even in winter, nature offers moments of beauty that inspire calm and clarity. Many naturists find solace in outdoor walks, hot spring visits, or cozy indoor gatherings that still honor a connection to the natural world. These experiences remind us that we don't need constant motion to celebrate life; sometimes, the quiet moments bring the greatest joy.

# A Season of Being, Not Doing

The naturist approach to the holidays isn't about rejecting tradition, it's about redefining it. By embracing simplicity and presence, we can reclaim the holidays as a time of renewal instead of exhaustion. The best gift we can give ourselves, and those we love, is our genuine, unclothed attention, free of stress, free of judgment, and full of heart. So this holiday season, take a page from the naturist philosophy: slow down, breathe deeply, and celebrate just being.



# **Our Naturist New Year's Resolutions:** Celebrating Growth, Connection, and Confidence in 2026



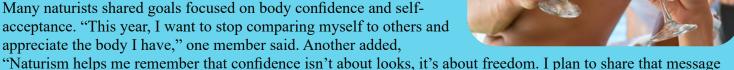
by The Western Sun Staff

As we step into a new year, members across AANR West are thinking about what naturism means to them and how they want to grow in the months ahead. From building confidence to caring for the planet, these resolutions show that naturism is about more than simply being clothes-free. It's about living honestly, simply, and with respect for ourselves and the world around us.

# **Confidence and Self-Acceptance**

more often with friends who might be curious."

Many naturists shared goals focused on body confidence and selfacceptance. "This year, I want to stop comparing myself to others and appreciate the body I have," one member said. Another added,



## **Outreach and Education**

Others want to spread naturism's positive message beyond their local clubs. "I want to invite more first-timers to experience a clothing-optional event," said a longtime member from California. "The best way to grow our community is by being open and kind."

Another goal is to volunteer more with AANR West and help people understand that naturism is about respect, freedom, and connection.

# Sustainability and Stewardship

For many naturists, caring for nature goes hand in hand with the lifestyle. "This year, I'm cutting down on plastic use at events and carpooling whenever I can," one contributor shared. "If we love the earth, we should treat it with care." Clubs are joining in too by hosting park cleanups, planting trees, and creating eco-friendly programs to help keep our naturist spaces beautiful.

As 2026 begins, AANR West members remind us that naturism is a journey, not a destination. Whether your goal is to build confidence, invite someone new, or live a little greener, every small step helps create a stronger, freer, and more connected naturist community.

What's your naturist New Year's resolution?

# 5 Simple Naturist Goals for the New Year

- Be kind to your body Appreciate yourself just as you are.
- Invite someone new Help a friend discover naturism.
- Unplug outdoors Enjoy nature without screens or distractions.
- Leave no trace Make every gathering more sustainable.
- Give back Volunteer with your local club or an AANR West project.

# **Naturist Events Around the World in 2026**

by The Western Sun Staff

The year ahead is packed with naturist gatherings, festivals, and travel opportunities for those looking to explore body freedom and community beyond their local club. From Europe to the Caribbean, here are a few highlights to keep on your radar for 2026.

Natupop Festival – Netherlands (July 24–26): A lively naturist music festival at Flevo Natuur featuring bands, food, and plenty of sunshine. It's one of Europe's most spirited naturist events, combining the energy of a summer festival with the comfort of body acceptance.

Naturist Gathering 10th Edition – Italy (June 4–7): Held at Camping Classe FKK near Ravenna, this weekend of art, yoga, and beach relaxation brings together naturists from across Europe. A perfect blend of Italian hospitality and naturist tradition.



EveryBody Festival – United Kingdom (August 20–24): Set in the woodlands of Dorset, this inclusive festival celebrates naturism through music, workshops, and fitness—great for first-timers and longtime naturists alike.

CMEN Summer Gathering – Northern California (July 20–26): A men's naturist retreat filled with activities, entertainment, and connection in a peaceful forest setting.

The Big Nude Boat – Caribbean (February 9–20): Bare Necessities' iconic cruise returns with 12 days of nude recreation, tropical stops, and open-sea relaxation.

GNI Gathering – Pennsylvania, USA (August 21–30): The world's largest gay naturist event welcomes men from around the globe for ten days of camaraderie, workshops, and outdoor fun in the Poconos.

And don't forget global observances like World Naked Gardening Day (May 2), World Naked Bike Ride (June–July), and Nude Recreation Week (July 6–12).

**Photo: Bare Necessities** 

Whether you travel near or far, 2026 offers plenty of opportunities to reconnect with nature, body confidence, and community—the true spirit of naturism.





Left: Andy Tabbat | Right: Wikimedia Commons





# AANR Western Regional 2026 General Assembly & Convention August 7-9, 2026 Laguna del Sol, Wilton, California



# My Unexpected Journey to Naturism

by Brenda



Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought Id be writing about how I started my Naturist journey!

A short background and you will quickly understand that statement. I am 55 years old and have lived my whole life, starting with my childhood, extremely conservative and modest. I don't remember ever seeing my parents or sister naked. When I started dating my ex-husband at 15, my body became an 'opportunity' for his 'jokes', which I dealt with throughout the 35-year marriage.

All of that combined, led me to a life of hiding myself, both emotionally AND physically. Never in the 35-year marriage did my ex ever see me fully naked outside of a couple of hospital stays. Any 'intimacy' was done under covers in a completely dark room. Anytime I changed or showered there were at least 2 locked doors, sometimes 3, between me and ANYone else...including him.



And THEN, I met the love of my life. The man who is safe for me in every way, mentally, emotionally and physically. After years of extreme gentle patience with me, I slowly started to rest in the safety of his love. I knew naturism was something he had experienced some at different beaches and that he desired to experience it in other areas of his life. While I was 100% supportive of him, I didn't think I 'could' ever get there. I thought I'd be the girl in the swimsuit at the clothing optional places while he was au natural. I also knew he would be supportive in that decision and loved me no matter what I decided.

Fast forward a little and I quickly found myself not only being 'ok' living life naked at home and in our backyard but longing to experience the freedom in other places as well. I'm certainly new to this, as I have only been to a nude lake park twice so far, but I can tell you, it has been such a transformational experience for me. I simply can't wait for my next opportunity.

It's not about my body. There will always be parts of my body I wish I could change, and honestly other parts I could change if I put in the work. But, if/when I do, it will be for me. It will not be to 'feel more comfortable' in the naturist events and locations. Naturism to me is a place to be safe and free in your 'right now'. To experience life in its fullest, without judgement or self-consciousness.

So, if you are on the fence about this lifestyle. Let me encourage you to focus on those you love. Focus on the new friendships that are waiting for you. Focus on the nature around you. You may be amazed how much freedom you experience when you do.

As for me, I plan to wholly embrace this beautiful lifestyle in every way possible. I've wasted enough time trying to just live through the days of my life. It's time to put LIFE into all of the years I have left.

I hope to see you out there soon, in whatever state of dress you are comfortable in!

"and i said to my body. softly. 'i want to be your friend.' it took a long breath. and replied 'i have been waiting my whole life for this."— Nayyirah Waheed



The mission of Women In Nude Recreation (WINR) is to inspire women to embrace nudism through community, camaraderie and connection. WINR passionately promotes the many benefits of nudism by encouraging and supporting women through body acceptance and empowerment.

\*\*Learn more: aanrwest.co/WINR\*\*



# **2026 AANR Convention- The Willamettans**

August 11, 2026 - August 16, 2026

The 2026 AANR convention will be at the Willamettans in Oregon. Convention takes place the second week of August, with assemblies the Wednesday and Thursday of the week, though there may be earlier social events.

# **Travel Club Spotlight**



Rocky Mountain Naturist Club is an AANR-affiliated club serving the Denver area and beyond. Our mission is to create wholesome, welcoming spaces for adults to connect, relax, and have fun without judgment and without pressure.

We believe naturism is about more than just nudity: it's about community, freedom, and accepting each person as they are. We host events where you can be as clothed or as free as you like—

nudity is always optional and your comfort is our priority.

Our group is open to all backgrounds and body types, and we practice kindness, consent, and privacy at every gathering. Newcomers often tell us they feel welcomed and accepted from the very first event.

Learn more by visiting www.RockyMountainNaturistClub.org.

SCNA is a clothing-optional "travel club," which means we are a social organization of nudists and like-minded friends with no specific park or resort to call home. We meet in the backyards of members with swimming pools or Jacuzzis, or we go sailing off the coast, or we hike on secluded mountain trails, or visit local beaches where we can enjoy the surf and sand as nature intended. We also participate in many activities at the various nudist resorts in our fair state.



We are the largest nudist travel club in Southern California with participating members from as far as San Diego to Seattle, Bakersfield to Texas; although most live in and around Los Angeles and Ventura/Santa Barbara Counties. Membership is open to families, couples and singles who are over the age of 18, including same-sex partners. All must undergo an application screening process and all agree to abide by our behavior policies at our events and activities.

Learn more by visiting <a href="https://socalnaturist.org">https://socalnaturist.org</a>.



# Finding Light in the Dark: How Naturism Supports Mental Health During the Holidays

by Dustin Cox, 1 Naturist Life Blog

The holiday season is often seen as a time of joy, connection, and celebration, but for many people, it can also be one of the toughest times of the year. As the days get shorter and colder, the lack of sunlight and the pressure to keep up with holiday cheer can really take a toll. Seasonal depression, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), affects millions each year, bringing fatigue, sadness, and a sense of isolation right when we're "supposed" to be happy.

For naturists, though, there's something special in our lifestyle that can help bring light back into this time of year. Naturism is all about openness, authenticity, and connecting with both nature and each other. Those same values can make a big difference for our mental health during the darker months.

One of the simplest ways naturism helps is by encouraging us to get outside and soak up some sunlight. Even a little bit of natural light can lift your mood, help you sleep better, and boost vitamin D levels. Whether it's a walk in the garden, sitting by a sunny window, or a quick dip in a warm pool, just being close to nature helps recharge both body and mind.



The naturist community also plays a big role. During the holidays, it's easy to feel lonely, especially if you're far from family or dealing with personal struggles. Naturist gatherings, whether in person or online, often offer genuine connection and support. There's no need to put on a social mask or pretend you're fine. When you're surrounded by people who value openness and acceptance, it's easier to talk honestly and feel understood.

Naturism also helps build self-acceptance. When we spend time without clothes, we're reminded that our bodies are fine just the way they are. We stop comparing ourselves to impossible standards and start appreciating what's real. During a season when ads and social media push perfection, naturism offers something much better, authenticity.

So if you're feeling the winter blues, try to bring a little naturist spirit into your days. Find some sunshine, reach out to your community, and take time to just be yourself. Sometimes peace doesn't come from the biggest celebration or the brightest lights. It comes from stripping away the extra stuff and reconnecting with what really matters. Naturism reminds us that even in the dark days of winter, there's always a little light to be found.

If you are struggling and need someone to talk to this holiday season, contact the lifeline.

988 LIFELINE

24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT



# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!



Photo: Jeff Jackson

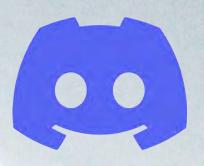
# Reaching the Next Generation:

# **How AANR Clubs Can Use Discord to Connect with Young Adults**

by Dustin Cox, AANR West Director

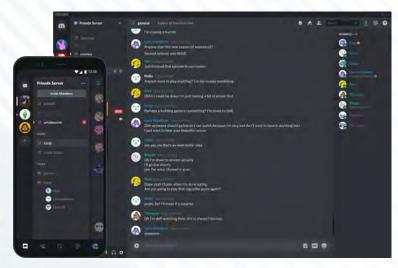
If you want to reach young adults today, you need to meet them where they already hang out and no, it's not just Instagram or TikTok. For the 18 to 40-year-old crowd, one of the most popular online gathering spots is Discord.

What started as a voice chat app for gamers has exploded into a vibrant community platform where people connect around every imaginable interest, from music and photography to wellness, travel, and yes, even naturism. And that makes it a powerful new tool for AANR clubs looking to bring new life (and younger members) into their communities.



# Why Discord Works for Young Naturists

According to recent reports, more than 85% of Discord users are under 40, and over half are between 25 and 34 years old. Roughly 37% of Americans ages 18–34 already use Discord. Even more interesting? Nearly 80% of users say they use Discord for non-gaming activities, hobbies, social communities, and lifestyle discussions.



# That's a lot of people, and a lot of potential naturists.

Discord's biggest advantage is that it feels real. It's casual, friendly, and designed for ongoing conversation, not polished posts. For naturists, that makes it an ideal place to talk openly about lifestyle topics like body confidence, social nudity, travel, and club life. You can host live voice chats, share event info, or simply hang out in a safe, welcoming space.

## **Bringing Naturism Into the Digital Age**

Imagine this: your club has a Discord server where members can join text or voice channels like #naturist-travel, #event-planning, or #body-confidence-chat. Maybe there's a weekly "Naturist Coffee Chat" over voice, or a monthly Q&A session with club leaders.

Discord can even serve as a virtual clubhouse, perfect for younger adults who want to connect but might not live near an established resort or club. Members can post photos (within respectful guidelines), share personal stories, or plan meetups.

Because Discord is built for community, not just content, it keeps people talking. It's more engaging than Facebook and more personal than email. And with the built-in analytics Discord provides, clubs can actually see what's working, from member activity to popular discussion channels.



# **Getting Started Is Easier Than You Think**

Setting up a Discord community doesn't require tech wizardry. All you need is:

- A free Discord account
- A clear purpose (social hangout, event coordination, young naturist discussion)
- A few channels to start like #introductions, #events, and #chat
- A couple of moderators to help keep things respectful and friendly

Once your server is live, share the invite link on your website, newsletter, or social media. Encourage

members to drop in, say hi, and be part of the

conversation.

The key is consistency. Post updates, respond to questions, and plan interactive moments, game nights, group discussions, or travel story hours. The more the space feels alive, the more it will attract new faces.

### The Future of Naturist Community Building

For naturism to grow, it needs to evolve with how people communicate. Young adults today expect connection to happen online first and Discord bridges that gap beautifully. It's authentic, community-driven, and full of opportunity for clubs ready to embrace digital tools.



**Photo: Florida Young Naturists** 

As naturists, we've always valued openness, connection, and shared experience. Discord simply gives us a new way to live those values, no clothes required, just good conversation and a sense of community.

AANR West is already leading the way by developing its own official Discord server, designed to connect members and affiliated clubs across the region in a modern, interactive space. The server will feature topic-based channels for clubs, events, naturist travel, body confidence, and community discussion, all built around AANR's core values of respect and inclusion. The launch is planned for 2026, marking a major step forward in engaging younger naturists and strengthening digital connections throughout the West region.



# Ready to Get Your Club on Discord?

If your club is curious about using Discord but isn't sure where to start, I'm happy to help. I can walk you through setup, help you structure your channels, train moderators, and share best practices for growing a naturist-friendly online space.

Reach out to me and let's bring your club into the digital age of naturism. The next generation of naturists is already out there, chatting away. Let's join the conversation.

Join the AANR West Discord: aanrwest.co/discord

# Playalinda Beach Update: Why Continued Advocacy Still Matters

by Dustin Cox, AANR West Director

Earlier this year, the American Association for Nude Recreation (AANR) urged members to take action regarding the proposed closures at Florida's Playalinda Beach, a treasured clothing-optional destination within Canaveral National Seashore. As part of the FAA's review of SpaceX's Starship operations, the proposal could close parts of the seashore up to 60 days each year, directly affecting the naturist section at Boardwalk 13.

The FAA extended the comment period until September 29, 2025 and AANR continued to emphasize the importance of public participation. While many members submitted thoughtful, respectful feedback, our collective voice must remain strong and steady through the year ahead.



Foundation Institute

Photo: Nude Lease on Life

### Why It Still Matters

Playalinda isn't just a local treasure, it's one of America's most iconic nude beaches and a symbol of responsible clothing-optional recreation. Closures that limit access don't only inconvenience beachgoers; they risk setting a precedent that could impact other naturist-friendly public lands.



Photo: Nude Lease on Life

The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) acknowledges the effects of launch activity but, as AANR has pointed out, does not sufficiently address visitor displacement, tourism, and the social and ecological balance that makes the beach special. Without strong naturist representation in the record, these concerns could be overlooked in final decisions.

AANR continues to advocate for naturist interests at the national level, engaging with the FAA, National Park Service, and other stakeholders. The association encourages all supporters to stay informed and

participate in constructive advocacy, not just for Playalinda, but for all public spaces that allow body freedom. Preserving naturist access at Playalinda is about more than one beach, it's about ensuring that clothing-optional recreation remains a respected and protected part of America's outdoor heritage.



The B.E.A.C.H.E.S Foundation is dedicated to preserving and protecting beaches, supporting environmental education, and promoting safe, inclusive access to coastal areas. Your donation helps fund conservation projects, educational programs, and initiatives that keep our beaches vibrant and accessible for everyone. Every contribution—big or small—makes a difference. Donate today and help safeguard the places we love to enjoy.

3.E.A.C.H.E.S

Donate: aanrwest.co/beaches



# Fulfill Your Bucket List with Nude Bowling!

Join the **Rocky Mountain Naturist Club** for a night of fun, flair, and friendly competition on January 18, 2026, from 6–9 PM in Denver, Colorado! Dress as your favorite superhero or villain or just bring your natural self for a truly unique bowling experience.



Spots are limited, so sign up by email to <a href="mailto:rmncdenver@gmail.com">rmncdenver@gmail.com</a>

Learn more: www.RockyMountainNaturistClub.org

**Rocky Mountain Naturist Club:** Celebrating freedom, fun, and body positivity, RMNC is Colorado's premier traveling naturist community. From social events and nude recreation to educational opportunities, we provide a welcoming space where members can relax, connect, and enjoy life au naturel—no judgment, just good vibes and great company.

# Celebrating Progress, Confronting Challenges AANR Government Affairs

by Tim Mullins, GAT Chair



I'd like to start by thanking AANR for the honor of being elected to the Hall of Fame at the annual meeting held at the convention at Oaklake Trails this past summer. I'm honored to be recognized by the Association. I'd also like to thank all the people who helped make this honor possible: the members of the Government Affairs Teams over the past fifteen years and the person who nominated me for the honor.

It's a lot of work to review legislation affecting nudism, and without the teamwork, it would not be possible to stay on top of the bills. So, for each of you, thank you for your efforts. I appreciate all of you. Over the years, there have been many team members who have supported our efforts to make sure legislation is nudist neutral or not a problem we have to address.

This year, we addressed a lot of challenges, but none more important than the efforts in Florida to block legislation that will come back again next year. The commitment of lobbying funds within the Region and by AANR seems not to have been understood for how important those combined efforts were and will be again in the year ahead. It's inconceivable to me how, after all the work and money we all put into the Florida effort, it is met with indifference by the members.

Without our fighting the efforts that were made, we would be facing bills banning kids from AANR and other nudist resorts, whether they served alcohol or not, and from public lands, or that the need continues to support the lobbying efforts. AANR Florida's long-term commitment to lobbying is critical to the nude recreation venues, public and private, in the Sunshine State.

We had a record number of bills we reviewed this year. The theme of protecting children is being weaponized against nudists and nudist venues. We have fought for parents to be able to bring their own children to traditional nude use beaches and resorts. This is not a fight we can afford to ignore or lose. AANR and the regions need to support lobbying efforts that will spread if they are successful in one state to other states.

Florida is a hotbed of poorly written legislation that the AANR-Florida Region has fought for years. Now, some are growing complacent in the support, since we have had some level of success. That is not possible to maintain without a renewed commitment to lobbying in Tallahassee.

Other regions can't depend on AANR-Florida doing the work alone; that is why AANR supported the requests for funds that were shared with members throughout the year. We depend on members' support across the whole organization to help fight the fight in one state, so we don't see it spread to others. It is not cheap, but it is much easier to fight in one spot than in all the States and Provinces of AANR.

To donate to GAT directly, please use this QR code to navigate to the AANR.com site which will take you to your AANR login:





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NEW Photo Guidelines

The Western Sun would love to have your photos so we can have more diverse pictures for our publication. All photos must be 300 DPI or larger. Please keep in mind that we must have a photo release for all parties in the photos. The release can be found at the URL below or by emailing us. Photos may be submitted to social@aanrwest.org.

Photo Release: aanrwest.co/release

We will no longer accept photos that do not meet the new criteria.



For questions, advertising or to submit an article for a future publication of The Western Sun, please send an email to <u>publicrelations@aanrwest.org</u>.

We look forward to hearing from you!

