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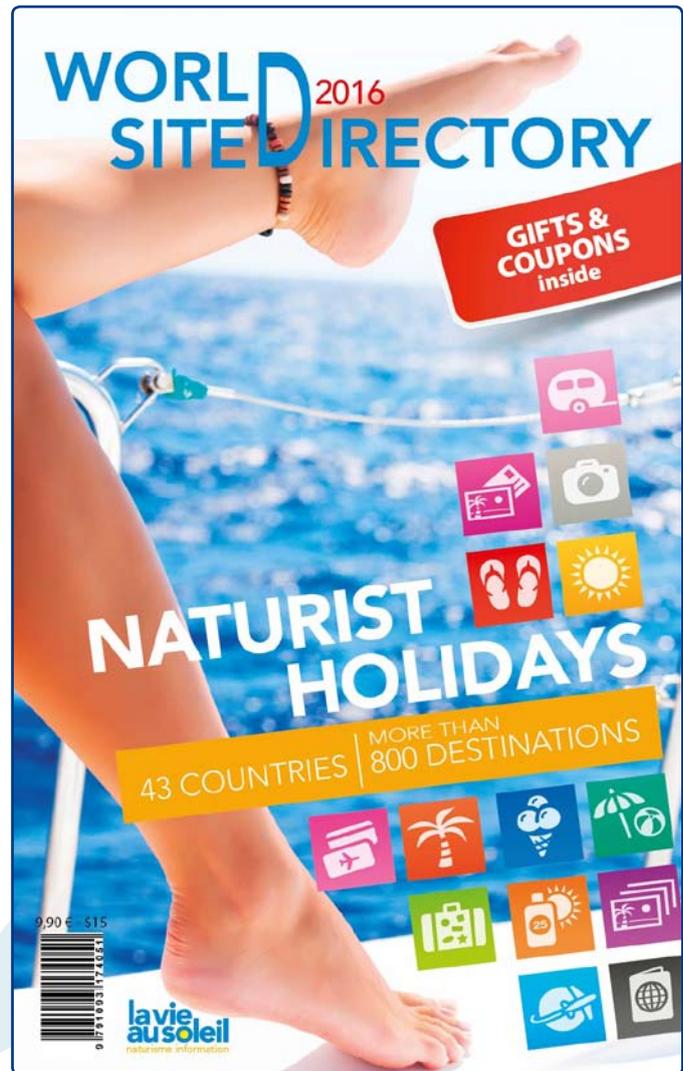
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## Le Betulle



Villaggio Naturista



# „Voicing your side of the story“

## Saline Valley, California State Parks and Public Comments

### **The FREE BEACH NEWS**

**. . . is published by Beachhead U.S.A., Inc. (dba Beachfront U.S.A.), a nudist activist organization dedicated to challenging the state's right to enforce statutory dress codes at inappropriate places, such as our ocean beaches, where people go expressly to be free from the demands of garmentry. Beachfront U.S.A. is a nationwide organization with headquarters in Southern California. We are affiliated, through interlocking Boards of Directors, with the Callen-Davis Memorial Fund.**

The past year has seen many people advocating their continuing embracing nature nude to governmental bodies that formally have declared nudity in their parks as disallowed: the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Besides their members voicing their opinions at public meetings of these two governmental bodies, two organizations, upon invitation, have submitted written suggestions for managing this embrace in parks within which traditionally they have been able to do so.

These membership organizations are the Saline Preservation Association (SPA) and the Southern California Naturist Association (SCNA). Both groups consists of people actively concerned about recreation possibilities in outdoor settings. The latter is an nudist group, as may be guessed from its name. The former is not, though nudists may well be members. The former is focused on a single, though definitively large, location: California's Saline Valley. The latter, as its name implies, has, as one of its emphases, the nude beaches and hot springs of Southern California. The events organized by SCNA members include venues beyond nude beaches: theaters, nudist resorts, art museums, private homes, etc. The latter is definitively a social organization as well as an activist one. Have you been to Saline Valley? I have, now many years ago and only once. But I still remember the beauty. Not just the natural beauty, but also the social beauty. Have you been to the nude beaches and hot springs of Southern California? I have been to La Jolla's Black Beach, San Onofre State Beach's Trail Six nude beach, Palos Verde's Smuggler's Cove, Zuma Beach's Pirate's Cove, and Bates Beach as well as Deep Creek Hot Springs. I have also been to Los Angeles' Venice Beach unfortunately not when it was a legal nude beach, but most memorably when BeachFront USA was canvassing near Brooks and Ocean Front Walk and Suzy and Dave Davis dashed nude to the waterfront as the police chased after them. If you have been to any of these places, you will understand why people

are willing to place themselves in front of a microphone to give a personal statement that is recorded as part of an official record of a government body's meeting and why they contribute to a group's position paper which may well be disregarded by most of the government body's advisory council members: the intimate embrace of nature and self amongst others similarly providing community and continuance for the area's specialness.

For those of the readers who do not know the Saline Valley, I will provide an introduction, perhaps a little heavy on the nude geology. Nude because the aridness of the region restricts the vegetation, giving observers an unobstructed view of the earth's rocky skin and the processes that shape it. The valley lies east of Owens Valley, that long, long valley just east of the Sierras Nevadas (Spanish for the Snowed/Snowy Mountains) of California topped by Mount Whitney. Owens Valley is more deserving of the name Long than Long Valley, that relatively short valley into which US Highway 395 climbs along its way to the Mono Lake basin, then Nevada and then Canada. Separating the Saline Valley from the Owens Valley are the Inyo Mountains. East of Saline Valley is Death Valley, separated by the northern section of the Panamint Range. North by northwest of Saline Valley is Eureka Valley; south by southwest is Panamint Valley. Death Valley has the lowest ground surface point within the United States and even North America: at some 282± feet below mean sea level within Badwater Basin (Laguna de Carbón in southern Argentina is the lowest point in both Americas, some 344 feet below sea level). Though Saline Valley's lowest point is some 1054 feet above sea level, the Inyo Mountains still rise rather precipitously from the valley's floor to a height (some 9000 feet higher according to one photo on Google Earth showing the valley below) ensuring white mountain tops in the winter.

Saline Valley is an example of a graben (a depressed block between two parallel faults) between horsts (blocks relatively stationary or uplifted), as are Owens Valley, Panamint Valley and Death Valley. It is part of the Basin and Range Province, a series of grabens and horsts that stretched from Owens Valley eastward to Salt Lake Valley (in which lies Salt Lake City) in Utah. It is also part of the Great Basin.

Stretched is the correct word here. The Basin and Range Province was thought to have been stretched, at least partially by the actions of the overridden Farallon tectonic plate's low angle of subduction, essentially banging underneath the North

American plate, rising up the Rocky Mountains as it stretched the land to their west. Remnants of the Farallon Plate still to be subducted include the Juan de Fuca, the Explorer and the Gorda Plates along the Northwestern United States as well as the Cocos Plate along the coast of Central America and the Nazca Plate along the coast of South America. Current studies indicate that the geological history probably involved a more complex scenario: that is, more tectonic plates and tectonic boundaries. Whatever the mechanism, the result includes volcanics, definitively in evidence in the Owens Valley as well as the Saline Valley.

The valley is endorheic, that is, an closed drainage system. Water flows in, but does not flow out. The passes are too high (5000 to 6000 feet above sea level) for the water to overflow, given the low rainfall, through them. Water escapes solely by evaporation and perhaps seepage, leaving various salts behind, such as borax (sodium borate) and sodium chloride, to accumulate.

Saline Valley is not pristine. Native Americans resided there until the early 20th century. Borax was mined from 1874 until 1895; the salt, from 1903 to 1935 or so, not to mention, gold, in the 1880's. The mining operations brought people and equipment, including the steepest cable tram in the United States. The isolation of the valley, the difficulty of transport contributed to the demise of commercial exploration of the resources of the valley. Even now, the trip along 50 miles of unpaved roads best transversed by four-wheel-drive high-clearance vehicles to reach the main draw of the valley these days, the hot springs, discourage casual visitors. Unlike the desert near settlements such as Barstow, the desert is not devastated. The vegetation, sparse as it is, thrives and displays its own natural beauty as well as that of the area's exposed geology.

The social beauty derives from the 1960's cultural discovery of the hot springs. The hot springs are not raw nature. They have been culturally enhanced by the efforts of numerous individuals who, for their own enjoyment and that of other visitors, have lined the pools with cement, devised a pipe system to protect water quality for bathing and propagated a set of rules to preserve the social harmony of their use. Furthermore, visitors (there are no residents) to the springs have organized themselves as well into the Saline Preservation Association (<http://www.salinepreservation.org/index.htm>) to better protect the valley and its social environment.

Mike Urbanek has visited Saline Valley more than I. He provided a good description of that social beauty in an write-up included in this newsletter a few years ago:

Saline Valley was made part of the Death Valley National Park in 1994 with the passage of the California Desert Protection Act.

The superintendent of DVNP at the time saw fit to designate the Saline Valley hot springs area as a posted Clothing Optional area. Years later, with a new Superintendent, the signs came down but the custom prevails.

Saline, as it is known, is as remote as one can get — 55 miles of rough desert road with high clearance vehicles recommended. There are no amenities except for a vault toilet at an oasis in a desolate valley surrounded by mountains, only accessible by 6,000 to 7000 foot passes, snowed in for days at a time in winter. It can be seen on Google Earth by entering "Saline Valley CA" which reveals a couple of pictures from the area; "Bare Crossing Saline Valley" is at the Lower Hot Spring. You can also see the location with a search by Google Earth "Saline Valley Middle Springs" entry. The AAA Death Valley National Park Guide map has the springs listed. Four hot tubs are spread out in pairs; two at the lower spring and two at the middle spring 1/4-mile north of the lower spring. Tubs are maintained by a camp host, drained and cleaned daily with the help of volunteers who donate bleach and other supplies. A third hot spring, about 2 1/2 miles northeast of the middle spring, is in its natural state with no tubs. For anyone who visits Saline it becomes the ultimate in clothing optional hot springs; a half mile stretch of desert you can enjoy without restrictive clothing. That is not to say you can walk nude all the time. It can be freezing in winter and when the winds start, you are sandblasted. I've seen the wind blow continuously for three days! All you can do is hunker down in your shelter or up to your neck in the hot tubs.

The Saline Valley water does not have the sulfur smell present in most hot springs. The water is just barely potable and you will find its taste a little strange due to dissolved salts.

The area is maintained by volunteers without the garbage and graffiti of most remote camping areas: debris is collected by all and hauled out periodically. The custom is "You bring it in; you take it out." Leftover at the end of your stay can be shared or put on the community table for someone low on supplies. Fire ring entertainment and sing alongs are common in the evenings. You can not imagine the peace of Saline without having been there.

## Info Focus April

**Deadline to remit articles: 20. March 2016**  
**Release of Focus latest: 05. April 2016**

This most recent change of administration, being now part of the Death Valley National Park, has brought on another demonstration of Saline Valley's social beauty. The Park System is developing a management plan for the valley. It produced a list of management options for comment by the affected public during the first part of this year (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=297&projectID=39438&documentID=56823>).

This period was extended once to allow for additional comments, ending finally on April 27, 2014.

The Saline Preservation Association (SPA) has produced its own response (<http://forum.salinepreservation.org/post/our-position-paper-6849515?trail=15>) to the various options in the Park Service's document. Essentially their approach is summed up in the following statement quoted from the SPA final position paper:

Within Saline Valley, the Warm Springs of Saline have also enjoyed a unique and special history since the first tub was established in the 1930's when the Civilian Conservation Corps, working on the Saline Valley road, installed the first tub at the springs for their enjoyment and relaxation. Since that time, under the stewardship of Inyo County, the National Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and now the National Park Service, the Warm Springs have been unique and special by virtue of the fact that the development, maintenance, and management of the springs has taken place under the hand and care of the visitors who have enjoyed the recreational opportunities offered at these remote camps. Official agencies have historically conceded that the great success of the Springs has been a result of the Visitor Community's care and dedication, which could never be matched by government involvement in the direct management of the springs beyond basic necessary regulations to ensure public safety and a continued quality experience for all.

Throughout the decades, the demographic of the visitor to the Springs has changed and will likely continue to change. What has not changed, yet continues to draw the present-day visitor is the unique sense of freedom found in a park that was created by the people, for the people. The historic style of management at the Springs, relying largely upon its visitors and their talent and dedication is what has made this area special. It is what draws the modern day visitor to this remote location. We owe it to future visitors to maintain that quality of the springs which has drawn past and present visitors, and will continue to draw future visitors and offer them the unique experience that is Saline Valley.

To that end, while recognizing the need for adequate regulations to ensure that quality of experience, the Saline Preservation Association recommends a light and minimal approach by the governing

agency of the National Park Service to ensure future enjoyment while allowing the continued practice of reliance upon the Visitor Community to maintain and manage the Warm Springs of Saline Valley. Essentially the National Park Service should recognize the effectiveness of the people enjoying and maintaining the Saline Valley springs and work with them to continue the effective management of the the warm springs.

As far as I can discern, the National Park Service has yet to issue its final management plan for the Saline Valley. Its web page (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=39438>) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Saline Valley Warm Springs still mentions that the National Park Service is preparing the management plan and the EIS and that the comment period will end April 27, 2014. My web searches have not found any current discussions on the final plan.

The same social beauty found at Saline Valley's warm springs often exist on the nude beaches along the California coastline, or did exist until the harassment by park and local law enforcement disrupted the social order. Among the regulars at a beach, a few individuals will take up the task of welcoming people to the beach, serving as a focal point for discussions among those present and providing an interface with the park, city or county officials. The term "mayor" is often applied to these individuals (see <http://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/mayor-of-the-nude-beach-6332360> for instance). Volleyball games seemingly spontaneously develop after volunteers bring down strings, posts and net. This social beauty is actively protected. At Black Beach, I saw a man who set his towel right next to a woman unwanted quickly surrounded by an informal committee of regulars challenging his act against her privacy - a more often required community response since nude beaches, unlike Saline Valley, are near urban areas, even though they may be, in a sense, isolated.

As you may know, the Cahill Policy allowing tolerance of nude beaches in state parks, such as San Onofre's Trail Six, was disavowed by a recent now-dismissed administration of California ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California\\_Department\\_of\\_Parks\\_and\\_Recreation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Department_of_Parks_and_Recreation) [http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/20/local/Department\\_of\\_Parks\\_and\\_Recreation](http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/20/local/Department_of_Parks_and_Recreation)). That administration was dismissed mainly because of a discovery of significant unreported funds during a fiscal crisis threatening park closures (see [la-me-state-parks-20120721](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=843&) [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=843&](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=843&) for more details). The Cahill Policy disavowal led many nudists to attend the public meetings of the California State Parks and Recreation Commission () which provides oversight and guidance for the actual administration of the park system. The nine vo-

ting members are appointed by the state governor to represent the various interests and expertise specified by the commission's establishing statute. For example, three members need to represent the public (only five voting commissioners and their bios are currently listed on its website). The nudists also attended the public meetings of the Parks Forward Commission, an independent commission set up "to address the financial, operational, and cultural challenges facing state parks to ensure the system's long-term viability."

According to the Southern California Naturist Association (SCNA)'s review of the year 2014, the chair of the Parks Forward Commission privately asked SCNA members testifying at a public meeting to submit a written statement of their ideas for nudist use of the parks. They submitted a very well-written proposal (<http://www.socalnaturist.org/forum/parksforward2014.pdf>). The proposal's first part covers legally designating clothing-optional areas at several of state beaches traditionally having such use (e.g., Black's Beach, San Onofre, Gaviota, Gray Whale Cove and Indian Head Beach). The second part deals with such use along hiking trails, lakes, rivers and hot springs within the state park system, such as Malakoff Diggins State Historical Park, Yuba River, Sacramento River, the Kern River, the Mammoth Lake area, Big Sur, Anza-Borrego wilderness, etc. The proposal recommended signage, permanent and temporary, informing park users that they are entering a clothing-optional area where they may encounter nude individuals and groups. It also strongly recommended the use of what-it-called "sponsoring" groups to provide a social context and interface with the clothing-optional users of the designated nude beaches — that is, the continuance and support for the social beauty that have already been developed by the regular nude users of these areas.

Unfortunately they were told before the final report was published that nude use of the parks would not be addressed within that report

([http://parksforward.com//site/uploads/PFI%20Recommendations\\_Final\\_012915%20%2800278207xA1C15%29%20%281%29.pdf](http://parksforward.com//site/uploads/PFI%20Recommendations_Final_012915%20%2800278207xA1C15%29%20%281%29.pdf)).

The nudists were not the only activists to receive such a notice: e.g., dog lovers who want greater access for their dogs, according the information SCNA received. If you do read the report ([http://parksforward.com//site/uploads/PFI%20Recommendations\\_Final\\_012915%20%2800278207xA1C15%29%20%281%29.pdf](http://parksforward.com//site/uploads/PFI%20Recommendations_Final_012915%20%2800278207xA1C15%29%20%281%29.pdf)), you may get a sense of why the proposals of the nudists and the dog lovers were not mentioned.

To me, the document's approach is very progressive financial-angle glad-handing: park progress will be made through organizational expertise, redesign and fund-raising. Many organizations mentioned within the document are those for which financial support for the California's parks and the park department are their priority. Others illustrate excellent management and running of parks. Importantly for us, encouraging a wider diversity of state park users and their input is a stated goal, though nudists and dog lovers are not hinted. We can hope that we are among the diversity.

Hope does lie in the fact that individuals do make a difference. We can take heart in the support given to nude beaches by members of the California's Coastal Commission, specifically in the case of Pirate Cove on San Luis Obispo Bay. In July 2014, the commissioners overwhelmingly voted to prevent a county-sponsored development plan from being fully implemented and thus bringing public pressure to eliminate nudity. Commissioner Jana Zimmer specifically mentioned the importance of maintaining the long clothing-optional recreation tradition of the site. On April 21, 2015, the Venice Neighborhood Council's Board of Officers (<http://www.venicenc.org/board/>) voted overwhelmingly to petition the Los Angeles County Commissioners to allow women to bare their chests on the beach as men can. Melissa Diner, one of the council's community officers, inspired by Scout Willis, Demi Moore and Bruce Willis' daughter (

[dailynews.com/entertainment/gossip/scout-willis-walks-topless-new-york-article-1.1808910](http://dailynews.com/entertainment/gossip/scout-willis-walks-topless-new-york-article-1.1808910)), sponsored the motion (<http://www.vice.com/read/we-spoke-to-the-woman-fighting-to-legalize-toplessness-in-los-angeles-424>).

Jana Zimmer and Melissa Diner may not be nudists, but their views are important to the clothing-option use of beaches and parks. The June 2015 Southern California Naturist Association's newsletter voiced some optimism with the recent change in the California State Parks and Recreation Commission ([http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=843](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=843)).

The state governor Jerry Brown appointed two new youthful commissioners whose term began April 2, 2015. He also appointed a new State Parks Director who proceeded to bring in new top staff. At the Commission's May 1 2015 public meeting, SCNA's Gary Mussell's reminder that the commission could itself just designate clothing-optional areas under current department regulations whetted the curiosity of one of the new commissioners. Naturist Action Committee member's Allen Baylis' offer to discuss the regulation text was accepted by the commission's Chief Counsel Tara E. Lynch.

Getting to the point of being able to suggest names to the governor for the next round of commissioners' replacement would be ideal. Being able to do so may involve changing the attitude of a good percentage of California's voting public. Johann Hari's book *Chasing the Scream* contains a chapter (High Noon) on two successful movements to legalize marijuana: Colorado and Washington State. The two movement used different approaches. The Colorado movement emphasized the greater harmfulness of the legal drug alcohol against the less dangerous but illegal drug marijuana. The Washington State movement stressed the harmful social effects of marijuana prohibition for everyone, especially the marijuana non-smokers. Supposedly in both states, 85% of the residents are marijuana non-smokers. Only 15% are marijuana smokers.

Convincing non-smokers of their own interests in legalization was the key for the large majority in the passing of the legalization propositions in both states. What percentage of Americans sunbath nude? Two percent, according to one Huffington Post article ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/16/nude-beaches-which-countr\\_n\\_1521336.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/16/nude-beaches-which-countr_n_1521336.html)), based on a survey done by Harris Interactive for Expedia (<http://viewfinder.expedia.com/news/expedia-2013-flip-flop-report#node-1671>).

The Naturist Action Committee's California 2009 poll (<http://www.naturisteducation.org/nef.ca.poll.2009/>) found 40% of Californians have skinny-dipped or nude sunbathed. We may not be able

to finance the promotion of a proposition freeing beaches, back yards and announced venues from anti-nudity ordinances, but we can argue in front of decision-making commission and similar bodies effectively for the same goal. Perhaps the strongest argument is just appearing in front of such bodies and openly voicing our thoughts.

*Editor: Ed Plummer*

## Bart Wijnberg has died

In October 2015  
Bart Wijnberg died at age 70.

From 1984 till 1989 Bart was President of the NFN, thereafter he was President of the International Naturist Federation (INF-FNI) till 1995.

By his gentle way of working he cleared many barriers inside and outside of naturism. End of the '80ies he was also engaged in the drafting of law, making practice of public nudity possible still today. That way he was one of the people who had put the NFN and the naturism in the Netherlands on the map. In addition he was member of the editorial office of *Naturisme*, the predecessor of *UIT!*.

As *éminence grise* (person with high reputation) he regularly gave advice to the NFN.

Bart was privately buried.  
We wish his family a lot of vigour.





# „Naturist Meeting in Portugal“

**Over 3 days 60 naturists visits the village of Piodão to meet**

In November 2015 the CNC - Clube Naturista do Centro - carried out its greatest adventure since it was founded in 1998.

The club reserved a hotel for a naturist meeting for the first time in Portugal.

During three days more than 60 naturists were in the village of Piodão, one of the most beautiful villages of Portugal, and enjoyed a hotel with a swimming pool, Jacuzzi and gym in naturist environment.

A fantastic weekend whose success led the club to immediately book the hotel for the 2nd Meeting of Piodão to celebrate its 18th anniversary in 2016.

In a short time and more than 10 months away from the event, reservations have reached 95%.

The meeting is open to affiliated and non-affiliated naturists. This event has become a reference in the Portugal naturist community.

Attached some pictures of the meeting.

