

## My Story by Donna

In 1984, my brother visited Black's Beach in San Diego. For Christmas that year he sent me the World Guide to Nude Recreation and said he thought I would enjoy the atmosphere at Black's Beach. At that time, I thought he was a little crazy... I worried about my body in a bathing suit, how could I possibly take it off? The pictures of locations where you might be acceptably nude were gorgeous (and many looked very natural and remote). I tucked the thought away and said, "Maybe if I ever get a chance to try it, I will". I had always been self-conscious about my body. I developed early and at thirteen I had a woman's body, with an hour-glass figure and large breasts. Throughout my life I struggled with a weight problem. In the best of times, I looked pretty good in a bathing suit and loved to swim, but I fluctuated between enjoying my body and the attention it brought me, and worrying that I was overweight and not the magazine perfect body.

Thanks to marriage, having two children, and developing some bad eating habits, I gained weight. I varied as much as 40-50 pounds up and down in my dieting and struggle with weight. In one of my slimmer years, I was swimming regularly in the YMCA pool. I met an elderly Dutch man and his wife. They were nudists and talking to them made me feel interested in trying it. Body acceptance is a tenet of nudism, so it wouldn't matter if you were fat or had scars or other problems. Frank, who was 76 years old at the time, said he had been a nudist since he was ten years old. He said he had a remote porch that was private enough for nude sunbathing if I would like to try it there. He even offered to leave the house, or remain clothed if I preferred. I wasn't concerned about either since he had always been a gentleman, and he was quite a bit older than me. I loved the feeling of sun and air on my body. It was so relaxing to just read or take the sun, and have no binding clothes. Several times that summer and the next I visited his porch for my private sunbath. I still had not ventured into the world of social nudism.

After Frank's wife died, he took several Bare Necessities cruises. I would look at his photo albums of the costumes and islands and the wonderful time he seemed to be having. I referred him to several of my friends for traveling companions on the cruises, to Cap D' Agde, and other nudist experiences. One summer he asked me if I would like to go to Paradise Valley, a nudist club in north Georgia. He didn't enjoy driving long distances and would appreciate the company. Since we went during the week there weren't many people there. The first time I went there I had a few fears because I had never been around anyone nude except Frank (and much of the time I was alone on his porch). He explained the procedure he always followed when visiting the club. He said you take off your clothes and leave them in the car, and then just proceed to the pool with your towel, umbrella, sunscreen, and other trappings for a normal day at the pool. At first I felt strange, but I decided it was like swimming, the best way was just to jump into it and not think about my body. It felt great! Swimming, walking in the woods, taking in the sun, and just being there with friends became a very wonderful pastime that summer.

In 1996, I got to go with Frank, and Vee and Carol on the Bare Necessities Cruise to Cayman Islands, Jamaica and a special private island. This is where I became a true nudist. Everyone I met was friendly, outgoing, interesting and I had a fantastic experience. I even met Alan on this cruise (but that is another story). There was so much to do, the cruise itself was great, and I probably never had more fun in my entire life! When I went home, I had two photo albums, a nude one and a prude one. I knew this was where I felt accepted and didn't have to worry about anything but having a good time. I became a card carrying nudist. After moving to Ohio and visiting White Thorn Lodge, I knew I was hooked for life.