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## Consider a nude summer swim

Lisa Gutierrez  
Ink

June 18 2013

We spend the first nine months of our lives floating naked, safe and warm in a watery cocoon, until some doctor/midwife/paramedic yanks us into the world of the clothed. Oh the inhumanity.

Some of us never again experience the freedom of swimming in our birthday suit.

Mark Partin does, every month.

Partin and fellow members of the Heartland Naturists of Kansas City skinny-dip together the third Friday of every month. The group has been around since 1982, started by folks who wanted to swim naked every now and then.

Members — 20-somethings through 80-year-olds — meet in a heated indoor pool in a secret location in Kansas City. They won't



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JILL TOYOSHIBA/The Kansas City Star

More young people are discovering the joys of being naked in nature. Photo illustration.

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tell you the location until you pass the background check they say they conduct to keep criminal and pervy looky-loos away.

“It’s really tough to describe until you’ve done it,” says Partin, 39, the group’s treasurer. “You can kind of explain what it’s like swimming without your suit, but the feeling, actually feeling it, you can’t grasp without doing it. It’s like trying to explain what a sunset is like.”

Now that summer is here, people are thinking about getting naked in the water.

During Nude Recreation Week, July 7-14, clubs, beaches, rivers, lakes and pools across the country will set up simultaneous naked swims and try to break the Guinness World Record for the largest number of people skinny-dipping at once.

The largest event involving multiple locations had 13,674 participants in July 2008.

Forty Acre Club, a nudist resort in Lonedell, Mo., near St. Louis, will be part of the attempt in July to set a record.

Chatter about nude swimming on Twitter — #skinnydipping — has heated up in recent weeks, too.

*“want to go skinny dipping for some strange reason.”*

*“during this summer I wanna go skinny dipping at least once.”*

*“My urge to go skinny dipping increases everyday ! My minds made up.”*

*“went skinny dipping in the ocean for the first time last night.”*



([http://media.kansascity.com/static/django-media/ink/img/articles/2013/6/gkubma1s.4-0\\_1.jpg](http://media.kansascity.com/static/django-media/ink/img/articles/2013/6/gkubma1s.4-0_1.jpg))

Jill Toyoshiba, The Kansas City Star

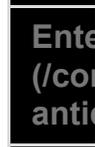
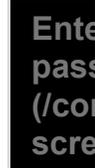
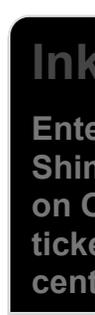
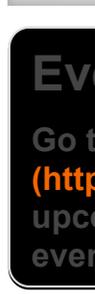
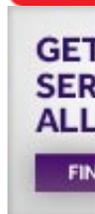
Consider taking the naked plunge into skinny-dipping. Model: Kate from Seven Model Management. Photo assistant: Tasha Fabela-Jonas

“You can kind of explain what it’s like swimming without your suit, but the feeling, actually feeling it, you can’t grasp without doing it. It’s like trying to explain what a sunset is like.” - Mark Partin, member of Heartland Naturists

### Where to bare it all

\*\* Gaea Retreat Center: A favorite of the Heartland Naturists, Gaea is not technically a nudist park, but it does not encourage or discourage nudity. Many parts are off-limits to nudity. 25110 235th St., McLouth, Kan. 913.796.2141. [campgaea.org](http://www.campgaea.org) (<http://www.campgaea.org/>).

\*\* Lake Edun: This naturist park — with fields, woodlands, prairies, a lake and beaches — bills itself as a family-oriented, clothing-optional retreat. Any and all types of blatant sexual behavior are not



Actress Diane Kruger caused a minor stir last month by revealing how she and long-time boyfriend Joshua Jackson beat the heat of summer.

“Well I prefer to go naked,” she told E! News. “But we have a pool, and actually our house is sort of in the middle of nowhere, so skinny-dipping is still an option.”

The key words there are “middle of nowhere,” for in many states, being naked in public is illegal.

Some “textilists” — what naturists call non-naturists — think it’s immoral, too. Many in the Heartland Naturists group are afraid to tell their families, friends and especially employers that they like to have good, clean fun while naked. (Nude bowling in August!)

“As you might imagine, there are people who see nudism/naturism as wrong and might take steps to harass or harm us,” Partin says.

In Kansas, home to at least three nude or clothing-optional resorts, publicly exposing a sex organ is legally considered lewd and lascivious behavior. In Missouri, you can get arrested for sexual misconduct if you expose your genitals in public.

“Make sure you can’t be seen,” Partin says.

Which means if your neighbor has a second-story window that overlooks your backyard pool, you’d better make sure they’re OK with your bare breaststrokes or someone could call the cops. “Basically, we tell people to go to a private resort or an area that is set aside for this,” Partin says.

tolerated. 5501 S.W. Indian Hills Road, just a few miles southwest of Topeka. 785.478.2276. [lakeedun.com](http://www.lakeedun.com/) (<http://www.lakeedun.com/>).

\*\* Prairie Haven: This 30-acre nudist/naturist club south of Topeka is open from mid-April to mid-October. Offers camping and an in-ground swimming pool. 19289 S. Morrill Road, Scranton, Kan. 785.793.2738. [prairiehaven.org](http://prairiehaven.org/) (<http://prairiehaven.org/>).

\*\* Show Me Acres: A nudist resort and campground for families and couples near Lake of the Ozarks. 5492 Black Elk Lane, Stover, Mo. 573-377-4348. [showmeacresnudistresort.com](http://showmeacresnudistresort.com/) (<http://showmeacresnudistresort.com/>).

## Skinny-dipping in KC

The Heartland Naturists of Kansas City host naked swim events from 8 to 10 p.m. on the third Friday of each month. Swims are June 21, July 19, Aug. 16, Sept. 20, Oct. 18 and Nov. 15. Cost for nonmembers is \$8 singles, \$12 couples. Newcomers are screened before invited. 913.735.0805.

## Naturism/Nudism 101

**What:** A CommUniversity class on the history, philosophy and legality of clothing-optional recreation in the Kansas City area.

**When:** Noon to 2 p.m., June 15.

**Where:** Room 204, Royall Hall, UMKC campus, 52nd Street between Rockhill Road and Holmes Street.

**Cost:** \$9.

A few years ago local nudists claimed a quiet, secluded cove on Smithville Lake for their swim outings. Then a bunch of non-naturists crashed the party, showing up just to have sex in public. The nudists haven't been back since.

It's so hard to find a good skinny-dipping place around here that U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder of Kansas had to go all the way to Israel.

In the summer of 2011, he and some other Republican congressmen took a late-night swim in the Sea of Galilee. Yoder took off his clothes before jumping in and apologized for it later.

That infamous swim made Yoder a hero of the American Association of Nude Recreation, which claims that 25 percent of Americans have skinny-dipped with members of the opposite sex.

"Obviously, Congressman Yoder is a typical American who enjoys skinny-dipping, like over 50 million other Americans," the group said in a statement when the incident came to light last year.

"Congressman Yoder's mistake was picking a spot to go skinny-dipping that is illegal under Israeli law."

That is your first rule of skinny-dipping: Keep your clothes on in holy waters.

Here are others.

### **Practice being naked.**

It helps to get comfortable in your own skin before you show it to other people. Walk around the house naked. Stay naked for a few minutes after you shower.

At the monthly Heartland skinny-dipping events, clothing is optional for female first-timers. (They figure guys are more comfortable being naked around others.) But even the novices don't stay in their bathing suits long, Partin says. "You jump in and you're hidden under the water. It's kind of a security blanket thing," he says. "After a little while, you forget."

### **Don't make it about sex.**

Just because you're naked doesn't mean you're there for the sex.

**Info:** [ecommerce.umkc.edu/commu](https://ecommerce.umkc.edu/commu)  
(<https://ecommerce.umkc.edu/commu>)

### **Sun Run Weekend 2013**

Spend a weekend nude in the great outdoors. This two-day naturist festival — this year on July 6-7 — is thought to be the largest nudist/naturist gathering in the middle of the country. Skinny-dipping is just one of many activities that include a 5K run, bike ride, blackberry hunt, community dinner and drumming around a campfire. To register, go to [heartlandnaturists.com](http://heartlandnaturists.com) (<http://heartlandnaturists.com/>).

OK, some of you are. (What's sexier than a nude dip at midnight?) But nothing spoils a fun group outing faster than the creep who stands too close or, worse, touches other people. That's enough to get a person banned forever from Partin's group.

### **Guys, don't be embarrassed if you get, uh, excited.**

It happens. The body will do what the body will do. If the sight of naked women is too much for Mr. Johnson to handle, politely separate yourself from the group until he quiets down.

### **Don't stare.**

Well, at least not after the initial, head-to-toe once-over. It's human nature to check out the other naked folks. But beyond that, the same rules of polite society apply to swimming nude.

"You don't walk down the street and stare at someone's chest or someone's crotch," Partin says. "You don't do that at the grocery store, and you don't do that at one of our events."

Skinny-dipping is not for ravishing your friends' naked bodies with your eyes, wrote Caity Weaver at [Gawker.com](http://Gawker.com) (<http://Gawker.com>) last year when she offered lessons in Skinny Dipping 101.

"That's what orgies are for," she wrote. "Skinny dipping is about enjoying the pleasant 'Water is everywhere!' sensations of a bathtub in an even larger bathtub. Try to interact with people as you normally would, keeping your gaze on their face ..."

### **Don't take pictures.**

Respect people's privacy. No photos. No videos.

### **Don't stay on land and watch.**

"Staying on the sidelines and watching makes you a perverted potato," Weaver wrote. "If you don't want to hop in the water, you should either turn your back, busy yourself with another task ... or remove yourself from the area."

### **Don't litter.**

That's one of the rules of Young Naturists and Nudists America (@Young\_Naturists), one of the fastest-growing nudist and online naturists groups in the country.

"Always leave a place (or a person) in better shape than it was before you got there," YNA says. "No littering. Respect your surroundings."

### **Don't drink and dip.**

It should go without saying: Swimming, clothed or otherwise, while drunk is never a good idea. NEVER.

## Bring a towel.

If you're going to sit down naked after your dip, be sure to have a towel to slide under your bare butt. It's good hygiene, after all. "All you need is sunscreen and a towel," Partin says.

To reach Kansas City Star features reporter Lisa Gutierrez, call 816.234.4987 or send email to [lgutierrez@kcstar.com](mailto:lgutierrez@kcstar.com).

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## Comments



Dave Schulz

2 years, 4 months ago

Secret location, huh? Yes, there must be 3 or 4 hundred big, heated, private, pools in KC...

Anyway, just my opinion, but skinny dipping is a solo activity or for two. If others happen to be around, well, that's a personal spice.

Imagine the first date convo: Hi. Hi, yourself. You look nice. Thanks, so what's the surprise tonight? Oh, I thought we'd check out a new club I found...you a good swimmer?



Michael Czerniewski

2 years, 4 months ago

Lisa, great job with the article.



Tom Mulhall

2 years, 4 months ago

Very good article Lisa. All the clubs are associated with the American Association of Nude Recreation <http://aanr.com> There is lots of great information at that site for first timers.

Skinny dipping is best enjoyed with others, not by yourself. For perspective, yes you can watch the Super Bowl game by yourself at home, but isn't it much more fun watching it at a party with other football fans? Same is true of skinny dipping, much more fun with other people. There are nudist clubs and resorts in 43 of our 50 states.



Mark Partin

2 years, 3 months ago

Thank you for the article, Lisa. We appreciate being able to spread the word about wholesome, family-friendly nude recreation in the Heartland. So many people don't know that we exist, it's good to let people know that we do.

I do want to correct Tom, though. Not all clubs are associated with AANR. While I personally am a member of AANR (as well as most of our club members are), The Heartland Naturists are not officially affiliated with AANR because they deal mainly with "landed" clubs - meaning clubs or organizations that own property, such as Terra Cotta

Inn. We are a “non-landed” organization, meaning we own no property and hold all of our events in rented facilities, at each others homes, at landed resorts, or on property that is legally set aside for nude recreation.

The Heartland Naturists ARE affiliated with The Naturist Society ([www.NaturistSociety.com](http://www.NaturistSociety.com)). They are very helpful to us smaller clubs, especially when dealing with local legal matters and providing us with a national network to support each other and to promote wholesome, family-friendly nude recreation.

First-timers should make sure that the club they want to try out is affiliated with AANR or TNS (or both), because there are clubs out there that call themselves “nudist” or “naturist” clubs but are actually swinger clubs using the nudist or naturist label to legitimize their activities. They will not pass the scrutiny of AANR or TNS to become affiliated with them if they are about sex. Nudism/naturism is not about sex. Period. If there is anything else going on, it’s not nudism/naturism and they won’t have the affiliation with either AANR or TNS.

If that’s what you’re looking for, then by all means it is your choice to seek out those clubs, but understand that the Heartland Naturists is a strictly family-friendly organization.

More information about us can be found on our website, including a Guidelines of Behavior page that will detail the environment we provide at our events and contact information for you to send private questions : [www.HeartlandNaturists.com](http://www.HeartlandNaturists.com)



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