

## Mardie's Story

I have probably been a "closet nudist" my whole life. My earliest memories are of running around the house naked as a child with my mother trying desperately to keep clothes on me. When we lived in California for 3 years ages 6-8, I had friends over and we would play in our back yard in the sandbox and on the swings...totally nude. One of the neighbors told my mom when we swung high enough on the swings to be seen over the fence. I was punished and told not to do it anymore. My parents were very conservative, but I was always comfortable with my body. I was overweight and by no means beautiful, but I had a comfort with myself just the same. As an adult, I became a registered nurse. Like many nurses, nudity wasn't a big deal to me. I had seen many people nude; male, female, young and old. As an adult, I was nude in my own house; temperature permitting. I was always more comfortable without clothes when possible. As I type this, I am sitting here in my birthday suit. In 1993, friends of mine invited me to come to White Thorn Lodge. I wasn't sure what it would be like, but I agreed to go. I think I was inside the gate less than 5 minutes before the clothes came off. What I noticed were people walking, playing volleyball, playing tennis, sunbathing, eating at the snackbar...doing all the normal things...just without clothing. It seemed completely natural. There was nothing sexual about it at all.

A lot of people come with preconceived notions of what nudism is and that nudists are a bunch of perverts. I blame the media for this. Nudism is about body acceptance and being in tune with nature. Once you have gone swimming without a bathing suit and feel the sun on your body and the gentle breezes on your skin; you'll wonder why you ever thought clothing was necessary!

Having been a member of WTL since 1994, I have heard and seen many funny things from first time nudists...I loved the person that thought that we would have a big bank of lockers just inside the gate and would take all their clothes away until they were ready to leave. And the people who come to the Pub Shop (our souvenir shop) and ask where the dressing room is to try on clothes...We have a mirror, but no dressing room. Oh, and I get asked this a lot: Why do we sell clothes at a nudist camp? We are nudists; we are not stupid. It sometimes gets cold and yes, we put clothes on when that happens. Also, some things are safer NOT to be done nude. Frying bacon, for example. Mowing the lawn. Once again; nudist, not stupid. One of the funniest things that happened is when a jazz band had played here for 4<sup>th</sup> of July one year, we invited them to stay afterwards and "try it". Two of them took us up on our offer. The one gentleman went to his car, opened the trunk, shucked off his clothes and tossed them in the trunk and shut it. Only one problem: his car keys were in the pocket of his shorts...which were now locked inside his trunk. He called AAA, and in the meantime, happily took a nude dip in our pool.

I had my own funny experience with AAA. Our truck motor blew up just as we pulled in the gate towing our trailer one year. I called AAA, told them where we were, gave directions and everything. Well, the tow truck driver they sent could not have been over 18. It was quite obvious that dispatch did not tell him he was coming to a nudist camp. And of course by the time AAA got there, I was nude. I saw no point leaving my clothes on. I was inside our fence. That poor young man looked totally shell shocked. I said, "Son, they didn't tell you where you were going, did they?" He blushed furiously and said, "No". I said, "First time at a nudist camp?" He said, "Yes, Ma'am". I picture the people back at his garage having the laugh of their lives knowing that this young man had NO IDEA what he was getting into.

In closing, let me say that next year will make 20 years since I starting coming to WTL. Give it a try, you will never look back. Being nude is a very freeing experience. There are no status symbols or designer clothes. The person next to you could be a millionaire or someone living paycheck to paycheck. You will meet people from all walks of life and in all shapes and sizes. Because with nudism, one size definitely fits all. Give it a try! And if you come to WTL, look me up and say hi!