

# BEACH BUZZ

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"Keeping Our Beaches Bare"

## Coalition of Naturist Leaders Confronts Rep. Foley and the Media

Rep. Foley's letter attacking the AANR Youth Leadership Camp was written on June 18, 2003, the same day that the first article on the Camp appeared in The New York Times. On that day and the next, Foley also appeared on a number of news and commentary programs.

On June 20th, Shirley Mason, B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation's Executive Director, sent an invitation to Rep. Foley to meet with the leaders of the national and local naturist organizations to discuss the camps, and to correct misconceptions he had regarding both the functioning of the camps, and naturism in general. A coalition of concerned naturist groups was quickly formed; those that subsequently participated in the meeting with Rep. Foley included B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation, South Florida Free Beaches/Florida Naturist Association, The Naturist Society and its Naturist Action Committee, Naturist Christians, Sunsport Gardens Resort, and Central Florida Naturists. AANR was invited to participate in this coalition, but declined, as did Lake Como Resort, the host of this year's Youth Leadership Camp.

In advance of the scheduled July 7 meeting with Rep. Foley, SFFB/FNA hired Ron Sachs Communications of Tallahassee ([www.ronsachs.com](http://www.ronsachs.com)) to set up a media conference for that day, and advise us on tactics and presentation. The cost of employing RSC was mainly borne by

individual naturist donors to SFFB/FNA's Legal Defense & Political Action Fund, with additional contributions from TNS,

representatives from the naturist organizations already mentioned, also present was Kyle Hofmann, a 16-year-old



**Bob Morton (NAC/TNS); youth camp attendee Kyle and his grandmother Marion Hofmann; Doug Mitchell (South Florida Free Beaches/Florida Naturist Association); Shirley Mason, B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation; Richard Mason, SFFB/FNA; Norma Mitchell, SFFB; Dave Gibbons, Central Florida Naturists; and Mike Kush, SFFB.**

NAC, Tampa Area Naturists, The Federation of Canadian Naturists & B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation.

Before our meeting and media conference, and confirming the importance of our decision to take this public step, on July 1st FL Rep. Quinones (Kissimmee) announced that he would take the lead in creating a new state statute restricting the participation of children in naturist activities. While we were holding a strategy meeting on Sunday before the meeting, Bob Morton of NAC was informed that TX Rep. Hughes had drafted Texas HB 50 to ban nudist youth camps there.

On July 7, an hour-long meeting was held with Rep. Foley. In addition to

camp attendee and his grandmother, who was an adult volunteer at the camp. (Read Kyle's account of the camp on page A.) Also present at the meeting with Rep. Foley and the subsequent media event, as well as at our pre-event planning session on Sunday, was a representative of Ron Sachs Communications.

At the meeting, Rep. Foley was presented with reports of child abuse at numerous non-nudist camps, and was asked why he was targeting a nudist Camp at which no abuse had been reported; Mr. Foley was asked to contact the Pasco County Sheriff to confirm this. We objected to the inflammatory language he had been using; he agreed to modify the language on his website. We objected



to being singled out as targets, and suggested he expand his investigation and call for standards to all youth camps: church camps, scout camps, etc. We stated that American families had a right to enjoy the naturist lifestyle. We spoke on the family values of Naturists, and on the safeguards at the camps: pairs of adult counselors present at all times, only participants allowed in Youth Leadership Camp site, etc. We stated we as Naturists could stand fair scrutiny, and offered to provide any information he might further require to make an informed evaluation of the safety of the Youth Leadership Camps.

RSC had arranged for the presence of reporters from CNN, local network TV affiliates, and the press. The principal presenters were Shirley Mason

(B.E.A.C.H.E.S.), Norma Mitchell (Seminole Health Club resident & former owner of Turtle Lake Resort), Marion Hofmann (grandmother of Camp attendee), and Michelle Watson (Sunsport Gardens manager). After the formal presentation, the media also interviewed Kyle Hofmann (16-year-old camp attendee) and Bob Morton (NAC, also representing The Naturist Society). The presentation points were the same as in the meeting with Rep. Foley.

On July 7th and 8th, reports appeared on all local South Florida network TV affiliates. Once again the media's attention was aroused, but this time it was we that were largely controlling the message. The reports in the various media were generally positive, featuring comments from Shirley

Mason (B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation), from Kyle Hofmann, and from his grandmother, Marion. In a separate interview taped the same day, Rep. Foley pulled back from his earlier provocative statements on the Camp.

On July 12th, Rep. Foley moderated the offensive and defamatory language attacking naturist parents on his website. On July 31st, Shirley Mason was invited to speak on this issue before the Tiger Bay Club of Tallahassee; also speaking were Kyle & Marion Hofmann, and Paul LeValley of Tallahassee Naturally. Shirley Mason was subsequently invited to appear on the John Walsh Show, together with Kyle & Marion Hofmann; the show was taped in New York on August 28th. (*See article on page 13*). ❄