



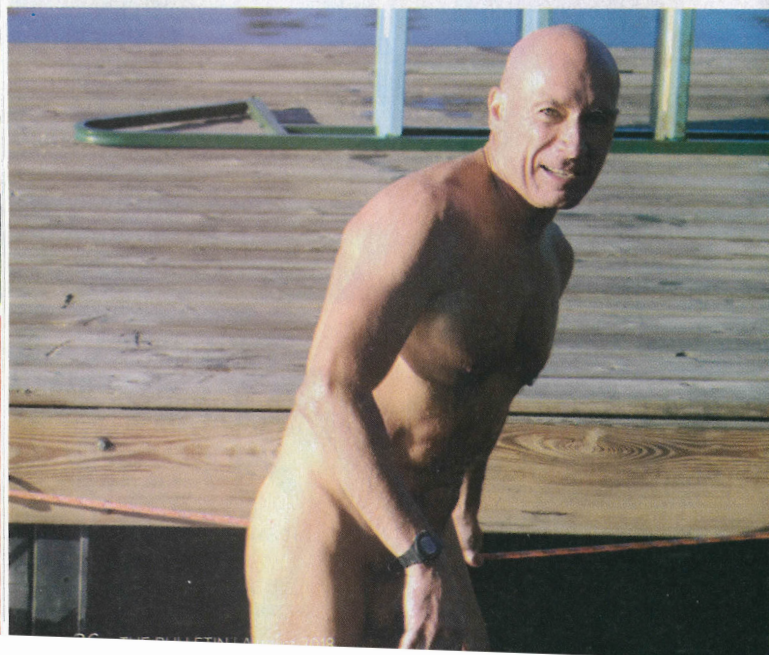
About the author
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Longtime AANR writer Pete Williams is an NASM-certified personal trainer who writes about fitness and simple living at www.ToLiveLean.com. Do you have an idea for a "Sporting Life" story or does your club have an unusual sports tradition? Email editor@aanr.com.

As a longtime nudist and former AANR executive director, Bill Schroer knows that some first-time nudists are intimidated by the thought of visiting a nudist club, where they might be among dozens or even hundreds of people.

While such mass anonymity makes the transition to nudity easier for some, others prefer a more low-key experience among a smaller group. That's one of the main reasons Schroer opened Nuance Naturist B&B, a clothing-optional bed and breakfast on 40 private acres in Battle Creek, Michigan.

"Resorts are great and for some people it's easier just to blend in with 200 of their closest new friends," Schroer said. "But I wanted a venue that was low-key and small-scale for people to get their feet wet in naturism without a lot of other people around."



Schroer has worked for nearly two decades to create Nuance as a modern clothing-optional retreat where the emphasis is on connecting with nature, your partner, or yourself. As Schroer likes to say, the loudest noise comes from the rush of water from the outdoor shower, a camera shutter capturing a sandhill crane, the "click" of billiard or bocce balls outside in the "jungle bocce" court, or just good conversation among guests.

Nuance underwent a "soft opening" late in December 2015 and has been welcoming visitors for more than two years. Memorial Day marked its first official season kickoff.

Schroer, a Michigan native, purchased the property, including a 1960s era ranch house, in 2000 and enlisted the help of contractor friends to gut and transform it into a modern, two-story home overlooking a pond.

The house is heated with a wood boiler that goes through 140,000 pounds of wood a year. He recently added a 200-square-foot solarium, heated to 78 degrees year round, that allows guests to sunbathe nude even in the cool winter months. Recent projects have included the installation of 175 trees, further adding to the property's retreat ambience, which will soon include Zen garden hiking trails.

The property is surrounded on three sides by marsh and wetlands. The fourth side fronts a road, but Schroer recently completed a quarter-mile privacy fence that ranges in height from 8 feet to 14 feet. "Guests are now free to be nude anywhere on property," he said.

There are three guest rooms that can accommodate up to six guests and long-term plans to add a fourth. So far, Schroer's clientele has been individual couples who meet their fellow guests, though some have indicated they might return as a group of two or three couples. Guests have been both first-time and longtime nudists.

In designing the B&B, Schroer struck a balance between providing a central gathering place, common among nudist clubs, featuring a wide-screen TV and pool table. There are also separate areas where guests can slip away to enjoy yoga, meditation, or watching wildlife. (A family of sandhill cranes makes daily appearances.)

There's a hot tub on a large deck, which goes the length of the back of the house, overlooking the deck, as well as an outdoor shower that's especially popular.

"I've tried to incorporate the element of friendliness that people expect at a nudist club," Schroer said. "It's a warm and inviting environment, which is exactly the opposite of staying in a hotel where nobody knows who you are. A nudist environment is friendly and personable. People talk to you."

People typically use bed and breakfasts as a base of operations to explore the surrounding areas, returning at night to sleep and have breakfast before departing again. There's plenty to see in and around Battle Creek, including a car museum, zoos,



golf courses, a bird sanctuary, and the Turtle Lake Nudist Resort, but Nuance is different in that people come for the relaxing clothing-optional experience.

"A nudist B&B is a destination. People come to my place to not go anywhere," says Schroer, who plans to offer a limited dinner menu to meet that demand. "They get undressed and don't want to get dressed again to go out to dinner."

An avid runner and outdoors enthusiast, Schroer has made it a point to offer recreational options. Plans are in the works for a pickleball court. There's already a beach alongside the spring-fed pond, which is clear and refreshing for swimming; anglers can catch bass and bluegill. A rowboat and kayaks are available and Schroer has plans to add a stand-up paddleboard. Because the property is surrounded by wetlands and there's nobody around, it's possible to drop a kayak in a half-mile from the house and paddle in the buff for long distances.

Though Nuance is Schroer's first foray into innkeeping, he's no stranger to the customer service business. He spent 15 years providing strategic marketing advice to companies, including Kellogg's and has owned a commercial office building in Battle Creek for more than 25 years.

"Though this is my first experience in residential hospitality, I'm used to customer service from the standpoint of taking care of professional tenants. In both instances, I try to anticipate tenant and customer needs and make sure people have an outstanding experience." ●

For more information, visit www.nuancebb.us.

