

Nature 'buff' communes in style

CHICAGO (AP) — When James Wills communes with nature, the 54-year-old grandfather really gets back to it — in the nude. "I become part of the whole scene and not an eavesdropper," he says.

Nature lovers are being startled in suburban woodlands by Wills, a slender, bespectacled statistician who walks the shady paths wearing nothing but his glasses, a wristwatch and shoes and socks.

He said that since becoming a serious nature buff in 1976 he has encountered strangers 120 times, and apparently no policemen.

"Only three of them objected, but there are no phones on the trees and by the time they get to one, they've had a chance to think it over logically: 'Hey, the guy wasn't hurting anyone,'" he said. "Their reactions vary: 'Hey, put your clothes on.' Or 'Hey, that's great,'" he said.

Wills, who is divorced and lives alone, said he has been arrested only twice — each time sunbathing in the nude in the backyard of his suburban Hanover Park home. Neighbors with small children complained.



Drawing by Jim Payne

He said he was acquitted in 1973 of disorderly conduct and public indecency because he was on his own property, and in 1974 a similar charge was dismissed.

"The laws are hypocritical and I had hoped to be found guilty so I could appeal," he said.

He said he has a suit pending in federal court challenging the constitutionality of laws cracking down on public nudity.

"It's primarily a religious conviction with me and that is a great driving force," said Wills. "A person should be unmasked. Clothes are a mask. They're only good for protection — like against sunburn — or for dressing up to be attractive. Clothes are a substitute for the real thing. They produce a fantasy, like drugs. People wearing them can't cope with reality."

Wills said he was inspired by "a spiritual message that bodies are good things because they are God's creations."

"Naked out on the trails, I feel like I'm part of the whole scene — a part of nature, not an eavesdropper looking on," he said.

Escapees all back in jail; two of seven doze to doom

(AP) — Seven prisoners who escaped from Oregon jails over the weekend are all back behind bars.

Two of three trustees missing from Portland's Rocky Butte Jail were captured Monday night as they dozed in a stolen car at a rest area eight miles south of Medford, state police said.

Troopers said a routine check of the license plate showed the car had been stolen in Milwaukie.

Loren Schneider, 18, and David Nelson, 22, were captured without a struggle in the compact car, officers said.

The third Rocky Butte escapee, Joseph Garton, 23, was arrested quietly in Portland Tuesday morning by state troopers and Multnomah County officers.

Barney Miller, 20, of Brookings, one of the four prisoners who fled from the Curry County jail at Gold

Beach Friday night, was apprehended without incident Monday night on U.S. 101 south of Gold Beach. Sheriff's deputies said the other three escapees were arrested earlier.

The Rocky Butte prisoners were working in the jail kitchen. They escaped Saturday night after sawing through the bars on a kitchen window with a meat saw, sheriff's deputies said.

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