



29-Aug-2011,
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Thousands join GoTopless protest in Asheville, NC in Aug 2011

Note that GoTopless Day in Asheville this year will be Aug 26, 2012 from 1-3 PM Pack Square.

GoTopless Asheville, Aug. 21, 2011, was a most extraordinary event! Some Ashevilleians claimed that more people attended than at any other downtown Asheville event, except for the annual 'Bele Chere Festival', which occurred a few weeks before.

Scheduled for 1pm-3pm, by 12:30pm there were already some 500 attendees, most of which were men with cameras - and wearing T-shirts. It was certainly an intimidating moment for us women to arrive to such a large crowd of what seemed to be "spectators" waiting with their cameras to see naked breasts.

But as the minutes proceeded, even though some women left the event as soon as they arrived (due to the intimidating scene of so many spectators), more and more women arrived and removed their tops. And soon after, a growing number of men began to put on bikini tops, bras, or covering their nipples with red tape, to support women's topless inequality.

Moments before the march began, our facilitator, Livienne Love, offered a powerful speech to a large crowd of topless women and their loving men friends behind them showing their support with covered nipples. After Liv's speech, the crowd was pumped! Liv then began to lead the march with all the rest of the courageous topless women in the front with her, through the historic streets of downtown Asheville.

As the march continued, more and more people joined in; eventually, the crowd had grown several blocks long, with the women at the front, their supportive men closely behind them, and an invigorating group of drummers. Asheville Police came well-prepared, making sure that all was safe while doing their best to keep us all on the sidewalks. But traffic often came to a complete stand-still, and not entirely because of us pedestrians... The many topless women and bikini-topped men was enough to have drivers stop their cars in the streets, honking and smiling, and using their cell phones to report the amazing sight they were witnessing.

Although a mother quickly hid the eyes of her son from the topless pedestrians, most people just smiled, honked, and rejoiced at the sight of so many people celebrating their liberation. Many women were seen in their cars and at the many open-patio restaurants, smiling great big smiles as if they were proud - and perhaps relieved - to see their sisters claiming their topless freedom.

By the time the march had made a full circle back to its starting point at Pack Square, the crowd had grown to some 2000 people. Fox Carolina news was present (following up on their Friday story about this approaching event) to interview our lovely organizer, Livienne. Liv was also videotaped giving a special thank you to Police Capt. Splain for the great support offered by the Asheville Police Dept. Capt. Splain said they were happy to help, but asked that the event be wrapped-up on time because "traffic is backed up for miles in all directions."

As to be expected, there were people who came just to watch. This is a big part of what top freedom will change; by covering ourselves and being ashamed of our body parts, we aren't just repressing ourselves, but also the many who

become obsessed with seeing breasts simply because they're usually covered. I think it's important to remember that both parties - those who are daring to bare their breasts and those who just want to gawk - have been oppressed by our society.

By 3pm, although much of the crowd remained, and following a big thank you announcement to all those who attended, the organizers left the scene with close to 300 signed petitions. Several women said they would join again next year and would even go to DC to claim their topless right if need be.

"I just wanted to say, thank you for putting this together! It really helped my self confidence as a woman. I have to admit, I got a little emotional. It was such an incredible feeling to finally be able to show off my body without feeling like I'm being judged or being frowned upon. I'm beautiful just the way I am! I love life, and being a woman!"♥

— Jessica Sayles

"A very special THANK YOU to Liv and Angelica for putting this together! I'm so glad I was able to be there today with my supportive husband."

— Donna Kline

"This was an fantastic event! Thank you for putting this together. I remember growing up and always seeing my dad topless, so I would walk around the house topless, and my mom would freak out when people were over. I never understood it! I gained a lot of self confidence today and talked to a lot of amazing people. All in all I had a great time! Thanks again."

— Sarah Kornya

by Logan Starman



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