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## Students run alternative Naked Mile day earlier than expected

*Students hope to keep tradition alive, avoid police patrols*

By Donn M. Fresard and Andrew McCormack, Daily Staff Reporters  
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Students run from Lorch Hall through the Law Quad and the Diag at 11:00 last night. They are running an alternative Naked Mile, a day early, in an attempt to keep the tradition going without the interference of the police. (ELISE BERGMAN/Daily)

Seeking to keep an 18-year-old tradition alive, a group of University students and alumni participated in an alternative Naked Mile run at 11:00 last night.

They evaded a police campaign against the run by scheduling it one night early and altering the route.

All Naked Mile participants reached for comment requested that their last names not be printed.

About four years ago, the University began a campaign with the Ann Arbor Police Department to end the Naked Mile due to concerns about student safety. During the 1990s, the event had grown into a media spectacle with the run eventually being broadcast on the Internet.

But the runners didn't have to worry about gropers or cameras last night. Susan, who said she rode a bicycle while clothed to scout the course and relayed information with the runners via cellular phone, described the event as a success.

"The only problem we encountered was at the corner of State Street and Washington (Street), where a cop car pulled up, but nobody was stopped," she said. "We all sprinted away at that point."

The group was reportedly comprised of 13 naked runners, two clothed bicyclists and one naked bicyclist. Three members of the group were recent University graduates, while the rest were students.

Runners said they took extra precautions against police intervention by setting up safe houses and plans to scatter if they saw a patrol.

Justifications for the run varied among the participants, with some citing personal and political expression as their objective.

"I think the Naked Mile has been deteriorating, and these grassroots efforts are the only way to bring it back," said Adrien, a University alum who participated in the run.

Danielle, an LSA senior, said she felt the participants acted in the true spirit of the Naked Mile.

"We ran with the heart of it, with no freaky men with cameras," she said. "I'm not an exhibitionist."

Some runners expressed defiance toward the Department of Public Safety and the AAPD for what they perceived as a crackdown on the Naked Mile.

"There isn't a single person who ran here tonight that wasn't angry at the police," Adrien said, adding that the runners' outrage was caused by what they felt was a draconian suppression of the Naked Mile. "I hope people will be inspired to do similar acts in the next 48 hours."

Danielle expressed similar concerns with the social implications of the DPS and AAPD's crackdown on public nudity.

"It's a superficial expression, but a true one, that I can own my body," she said.

Not all of the runners, however, described their motivations as political. Some said it was "nice" to end their time at college with friends.

"We got to smack our asses at Starbucks," Danielle said. "What could be better?"

DPS spokeswoman Diane Brown said she had not heard that a naked run would be taking place tonight, and that DPS had scheduled patrols for tomorrow night in anticipation of nude runners.

While running naked in public is a crime with a \$500 dollar fine and punishable for up to one year in prison, Brown said the University's concern with the Naked Mile is the danger students expose themselves to if they are brave enough to run in the event.

Brown said in the past the event has often been a hotbed for illegal activities. "It's a mixture of drunken people, illegal behavior, too many people, and too many people with ill intentions converging."

Many times the behavior results in runners being trampled or creating traffic accidents, Brown said.

Brown also added, "We have dangers of sexual assault. We had a report one year of a person in the crowd hitting naked people with a bullwhip."

In recent years, the University has also expressed worries on how many runners in the Naked Mile are videotaped, DPS Director Bill Bess said.

"When there are a number of persons watching the event, these spectators are frequently taking digital photos, which may end up on the Internet or TV. We have no control over that," he said.