

Nimbin bashing

by Mel MacMillan

For a few days last week Nimbin was abuzz with stories that there had been a murder in town. And while nobody could name the deceased it seemed everybody knew the names of the three offenders.

In truth there was no murder, but what did take place was a serious offence.

On June 4 two Ballina tradesmen Udo Olserdorf and Gary Harte, were in Nimbin to carry out some work on a property at Jarlanbah. In the afternoon before the assault, the men knocked off work and headed to the Nimbin Hotel. They intended to have a few beers, something to eat, and then return to their accommodation at The Grey Gums Lodge.

They stayed at the hotel

until closing time talking to a couple they had met from Kyogle. After the Hotel closed, they were standing with the Kyogle couple outside the Hemp Embassy, when at about 12.30 am without warning they were attacked by three young Caucasian males. The Kyogle couple were able to flee, it is believed unharmed.

The two men were wrestled to the ground and then kicked. Mr Harte was kicked into unconsciousness. After the attack Mr Olserdorf was forced to leave his unconscious friend as he went to try and find help. He made it to a phone where he called his sister-in-law, a Nimbin local, who then called an ambulance.

Nurses from Nimbin hospital attended the scene on foot and were hindered in their efforts to give first aid

to the badly injured victim by another youth who attempted to push the nurses' hands off the stretcher in an effort to see the victim dropped to the ground. He also taunted and abused Mr Olserdorf for leaving his friend while he went to get help. It is not clear whether this youth was involved in the assault.

Mr Olserdorf sustained bruises and swelling. Mr Harte was airlifted from Lismore Base Hospital to a Gold Coast Hospital where he was treated for head injuries. It is still not known how serious his brain injury is. He is still experiencing significant memory loss and remains hospitalised.

In a bizarre coincidence the Lismore police who responded to the 000 call placed by Mr Olserdorf's sister-in-law attended another assault that

took place in Nimbin shortly after. The police thought they were attending the incident to which they had been called, it was not until sometime later that the mistake was realised.

Senior Constable Tim McCabe from the Nimbin Police says they are investigating the assault and they do have suspects. They are calling for anyone in the community who may have witnessed the assault or has information to come forward. Of particular interest to the police is the couple from Kyogle who may be able to identify the offenders.

A group of Ballina tradesmen have donated a day's wages to help Gary Harte who has been unable to work since his unfortunate visit to Nimbin. Perhaps we as a community could also think of a way to offer him some support.

1080 or Chum?

Wild dog populations causing concern

by Alex Charles

With urban, rural residential, and community title development on the increase in Nimbin and its environs, the encroachment of feral dog populations into people's lives is becoming more apparent. The Nimbin GoodTimes has been approached with stories of livestock mauled or taken, dogs running in packs of a dozen or more, and people being bailed up in their houses, surrounded by barking and yelping dogs.

Neil Hing from The Rural Lands Protection Board said, "While wild dog populations in the Northern Rivers are generally static, when you remove some dogs out of an area, another pack will then move in, in a territorial claim."

The preferred method of dog control is with the use of 10/80 poison bait (fluoroacetate), an inhibitor of cellular function. The effects are recognisable as distress within 30 minutes to three hours of the animal

taking the bait, followed by manic then convulsive behaviour, and death up to two hours later.

A spokesperson from the National Parks and Wildlife Service said, "10/80 is a naturally occurring compound found in many Australian plants and native animals are mostly resistant to it's effects, unless it is ingested in extremely large quantities, a factor we endeavour to reduce, with our scientific baiting programme, administered jointly between the NPWS and the RLPB."

Neil Hing said, "The

favoured breeds of many people, for a domestic pet, are hunting dogs. These dogs may run with the pack if not secured in the evening, without the knowledge of the owners, and the cross hybridisation leads to a more brazen population with less fear of humans. The wild dogs, about 90% of which have some dingo blood, tend to be less aggressive, and more shy, in keeping with the dingo temperament."

Neville Plush, ex Sergeant of Nimbin Police, claims he lost eight sheep to wild dogs. "Most trouble comes from domestic dogs let loose

at night. They run with the dingoes and feral dogs, and are just not looked after properly," he said.

Demographics are changing around Nimbin with fewer farmers, and their traditional use of firearms for the control of wild dog populations, and the encroachment of human populations and their 'domestic' dogs into farming land and reclaimed bushland.

Remember, all dogs have the potential to be cunning and vicious. Approach with caution. Keep an eye on Woofy, even if he is your beloved family pet.



On lighting fires under arses

by Fia Poto

Bluey the local Police Commander made an interesting speaker at the recent meeting of concerned Nimbin citizens. He assured us he was lighting fires under the arses of departmental heads in order to get a better outcome for "you people". Gee all we wanted was some police protection in the street, we didn't want a firefighter.

Still, if he's able to pull this one off and get the folk of Nimbin feeling safe and sound at night, good on him. It is a big ask, particularly in view of the quite appalling relationship the local police have managed to establish.

Don't believe the last statement true? Well there was a good round of laughter when a person from the floor suggested selling the empty police houses, and using the money to provide nighttime security, but that wasn't the joke. No, the joke was nobody seemed to know there was a young copper living there. Here's the irony, hardly anyone knew he was there.

Lucky for us, Bluey's gonna fix all that, and don't you worry. In the near future we'll see police on the beat, on foot no less, sipping coffees and mingling with the chattering mass of us; patting little children on the head in a kindly way and not patting them down.

He did take pains to reiterate police have a duty under legislation to arrest people selling pot. So no problem then for people who don't sell pot. A police presence, pure and simple. Ah! we'll see.

Prison Boom

Tinkler George wasn't at the public meeting. Perhaps he was one of Bluey's singed brigade and couldn't take a chair. Perhaps he was in Macquarie Street, standing with other sitting members discussing important matters of state, like the parlous lack of prisons.

Did Tinkler play "Jail House Rock" to an excited Bob Carr and unwittingly set in motion a plethora of penal building? Because someone must be to blame for this state's scandalous prison expansion.

Bob Carr will have 10,000 people in prisons by 2007. Private prisons for the most part. The state won't actually have much to do with it because it's all down to private enterprise.

Naturally the state will have certain obligations in connection with these institutions. One would be to keep them full. A bountiful supply of the criminal class, recidivistic terrorist types, poor preferably and all delivered to the new enterprises by a judicial decision separated from state. No conflict anywhere, absolutely no cause for public alarm.

Telling Stats

But there is cause for alarm. 20% of all prisoners will be Aboriginal although they make up less than 2% of the states population. 2 out of 3 female prisoners will be Aboriginal and 47% of juvenile detentions are Aboriginal. (Sydney Morning Herald 7/6/05)

Added to this, 40% of all prisoners will have mental health problems and/or drug and alcohol issues. (ABC/4 Corners 20/6/05) A rough and profitable arrangement.

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