



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

WILD & FREE

Pansy Edition

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Happy new gumboot

There may have been plastic sheeting around the verandah to keep out the driving rain, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the revellers at Nimbin Rox YHA on New Year's Eve.

Being the only celebration in Nimbin, and with storms forcing the cancellation of fireworks up and down the coast, the Rox was well and truly rocking.

Co-owner Chris Clarke was delighted at the turn-up to see in the new year.

"There's about 70% international visitors and 30% locals here tonight," he said. "There's a real mix of ages and demographics, too - it's just a melting pot."

On the stroke of midnight, more or less, by the hostel's kitchen clock, the demographics erupted in a frenzy of hugs and kisses to all and sundry, including the band.

Then it was on with the music, well into the wee small hours, as the backpackers showed what they do best - party!

Chris Clarke said, "We're really just an old-fashioned backpackers here. We haven't invented anything."

It's obviously a formula that works. "We've had pretty full occupancy for months," Chris said, "and of the in-house guests here tonight, about 30% are return visitors."

"They make their own connections in the community, and keep coming back. Some end up living here," he said.

Perhaps among the range of accommodation available at Nimbin Rox, Chris could consider offering an additional option in 2008 - houseboats.

Happy New Year to all our readers!



So happy. Popular local band Mona Lizard rocked the new year in with their quirky mix of originals and well-known covers for the large crowd at the Nimbin Rox YHA backpackers gig.



Big send-off for Chicken George

From about 7 o'clock on the morning of Chicken George's funeral, a large cannabis plant appeared on Nimbin's central traffic blister, growing in the Council's garden beds.

As the sun obligingly appeared, chalkwork appeared on the footpaths, flags were unfurled, gunja faeries appeared, and by 1pm a colourful gathering had begun assembling at the hospital for a funeral procession to honour the man, the legend, who had become synonymous with Nimbin.

John Taylor's death at 66, of throat cancer, brought forth all sections of the community to express their admiration for the man behind the 'living artwork', The Plantem.

He moved to Nimbin in the 1990's after an incredible life-journey as, at various times, a carnie, a footy coach, a parking officer, a mechanic, a strapper, and 'the youngest repeat

offender in Australia', and in 2003 the survivor of a death adder bite.

Many of the insights Chicken George gained along the way are collected in his self-published memoirs, "Almost, Nearly, Never." His nickname apparently came from wearing a hat with a feather in it, that he'd found at the Ebor tip.

At about 1.30pm, police vans appeared in Cullen Street, traffic was stopped, the mull plant on the blister nodded its heads over the stone wall, and the brightly-painted coffin was borne along the main street to the sound of a single ringing bell, stopping for three cheers of "Hemp, hemp, hooray" outside the HEMP Embassy, and a respectful acknowledgement of the growing plant.

The pall-bearers, well-known cannabis reform activists, led the procession to the Oasis Cafe, where more cheers accompanied the

lowering of the coffin into the hearse for the short journey to Nimbin cemetery.

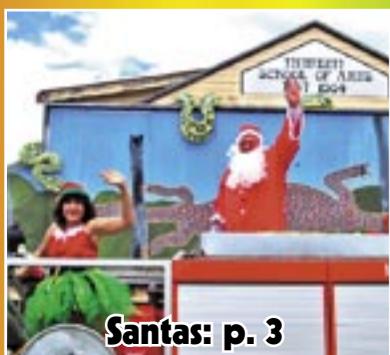
Many tributes were made, both in speech and song throughout the afternoon, in a beautiful service led by Peter Hendrix.

They attested to the generous nature of a 'kind gentleman' who had 'wisdom and poetry' in what he said, who 'never gave up' and who said after marrying Cassie Hall in 2004, "Love is the answer."

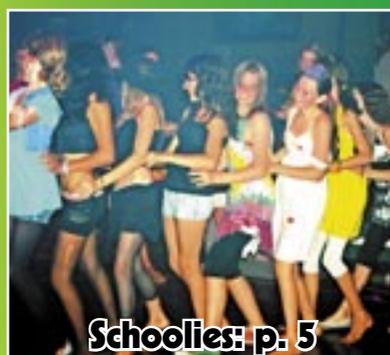
Around 4.20pm, Chicken George was planted in Bunjalung Country, his icon cannabis leaf flag fluttering, to the sound of a ceremonial didgeridu played by Michael Bayles.

A well-attended wake followed in the Town Hall, with a sumptuous buffet that included hemp seed cake.

At 6.30pm, the mull plant was noticed by police, who were good-naturedly boo-ed when they removed it. *More coverage p.8.*



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