

# Koala Kolumn



## Koalas and Tassie Devils - What do they have in common?

by Sonya Nourse

These two iconic Australian marsupials couldn't be more different for most people but researchers studying immune responses in Koalas (and marsupial disease generally) are beginning to see a common picture emerging between these species. Indeed, it may apply to much of our Aussie fauna.

Habitat loss and encroaching urbanisation and development, coupled with a history of hunting and translocation have all led to more fragmented wildlife populations here and abroad. Researchers have been increasing their understanding of how these environmental factors imposed by humans may predispose marsupials to disease.

They have found that a more fragmented wildlife population can result in genetic change in a species and this change appears to affect a group of genes called the MHC (Major Histocompatibility Complex). Plainly speaking this means that if the genetic

diversity is low then the level of MHC in the gene group is also low.

Scientists know that the MHC group of genes is responsible for recognising pathogens in the body's system and mounting an immune response to what the body recognises as foreign or 'non self'. This happens in all species (including humans) and protects the species from illness and disease. In humans matching of MHC genes is the key to successful tissue or organ transplants. So what does this mean for our wildlife?

If the MHC group of genes is low in wildlife then the immune response to disease may be inhibited or not occur at all. Sadly it seems that loss of genetic diversity in these genes just opens the door for emergence and rapid spread of new and old diseases.

For Tasmanian Devils, genetic diversity of the MHC gene group is so low, and the MHC type of the tumour and the species are so alike, that the body does not see the tumour (which is thought to be commonly transferred through fighting) as 'non-self'. This has resulted in a

transferrable cancer in the species now known as the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease. Because an immune response is not activated by the body in response to the disease it is progressing through the species at an alarming rate, unchecked by the immune system, decimating population numbers and threatening the existence of the species in the wild.

Many Koala populations are becoming increasingly fragmented and more highly inbred. It is feared that low genetic diversity in Koala populations may also be affecting the MHC group of genes making them more susceptible to diseases like Chlamydia and Cryptococcosis. These diseases are significant causes of Koala morbidity and mortality and can amplify population declines in already fragmented habitats.

On a national and international scale this type of research is now examining the link between genetic diversity, a low MHC group of genes and human impacts on disease susceptibility for a range of native animals. Our particular hope is that it will provide important information which will help protect the viability and welfare of our Koalas.

Information about Koalas, their food trees and Friends of the Koala is available at: [www.friendsofthekoala.org](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org) or email [info@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org) or phone Friends of the Koala's (24/7) Rescue Hotline: 6622-1233

Until next time, happy Koala spotting!

## Permaculture education thrives at Djanbung Gardens

### Cuba Presentation:

#### Living within our Footprint

• Thursday 20th November: Dinner & Images of Cuba slide show 6-7pm, Presentation 7-8pm followed by discussion. By donation (food for sale) Proceeds to CAPE Cuba Hurricane Appeal. Venue: Djanbung Gardens, 74 Cecil Street, Nimbin  
Robyn Francis reports from her 2008 study tour of Cuba with a thought-provoking presentation: Target One Earth, Living within our Footprint - What we can learn from Cuba. Robyn gave this presentation at the Climate Emergency Conference in Adelaide Oct 10 to 290 people. Robyn asserts that Climate Change, Peak Oil and all the other peaks and crises we face are symptoms of living beyond our ecological footprint, of irresponsible economic growth fuelled by over-consumption, greed and speculation. Cuba is the only nation living within its ecological footprint, come and find out how Cuba does it and what we can learn from Cuba's experience.

### Permaculture Launched in Taiwan

Taiwan is embracing permaculture with the first Permaculture Design Course starting 26th October in Taipei. Robyn Francis has been invited to Taiwan to conduct the course, which will be translated into Chinese. The course organiser, Peter Moorehead of Earth Passengers NGO, based in Taipei, is very excited about training a team of committed permaculture practitioners and teachers to develop strategies for sustainability for the island nation.

The group has already translated Permaculture Educations PDC Handbook into Mandarin in readiness for the course and hopes this will provide a springboard for accelerating the adoption and spread of permaculture, not only in Taiwan but

also in mainland China. Taiwan has a similar unsustainable ecological footprint to Australia and is very dependent on imported energy and goods.

### Vocational Permaculture Training Information Days for 2009 Studies

A series of free information days will be conducted at Djanbung Gardens every Saturday for 4 weeks starting Saturday 15th November. The information session will begin at 10am with a presentation by Robyn Francis introducing the Accredited Permaculture Training, qualifications and study options for 2009. The talk will be followed by morning tea (by donation) and a guided tour of the facilities and living classroom of permaculture in practice.



**Educational.** Robyn Francis at the Djanbung Gardens stall at Lismore's Sustainable Living Expo.

## Nimbin Environment Centre applauds Hurfords

by Jak Murphy

Recently the volunteers and friends of Nimbin's Environment Shop went to the forest for their annual picnic – good food, good people and a perfect environment at Warrazambil Creek.

We were able to set up for the BBQ on the banks of the creek where David, a local resident, had mowed an area for us and provided tables and chairs. Thanks to David for his efforts, also thanks to Vanessa, our shop manager who provided the meat for the BBQ and most of the salad. Nina and others created lovely salads and Keiron and I cooked up the meat on Col's BBQ plate, thanks Col.

After lunch some of us decided to drive up Warrazambil Creek Road to the mountain to see how things looked following years of logging. It is well worth the effort, especially if you have a 4WD or good strong legs.

There is a gate across the road, just by the Turpentine Road turn off, which is not locked but has a 'no through road' sign on it, and combined with two gate posts carved with the name Hurford Forests could accidentally give the faint-hearted the idea they may be trespassing, but us old eco-warriors were not discouraged and took a slow drive up the road.

We were able to have a good look at the work Hurford's have been doing. They have obviously been putting major effort into future tree production. Thousands of seedling trees have been, and are, being planted in the paddocks on both sides of the roads, and fences good enough to keep out rampaging wallabies are being constructed, so good on ya Hurfords, keeping local people employed and planting trees.

It was so lovely to arrive back at the picnic place to be serenaded by the delightful sound of Rain's harp, in harmony with the bubbling creek.

### In other news...

• We are having a garage sale/sausage sizzle/chaï tent/music fundraising weekend on the fourth weekend in November at the market area in the Community Centre from 8.30am.

We need good things to offer for sale, usable things that you would like to donate from your spring-cleaning or house-moving. We will collect big things or you can drop them off at the Environment Shop, preferably on a Friday.

• Volunteers are always welcome. Phone 6689-1441 and leave a message for our indefatigable manager Vanessa, or drop in.



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# Northern Rivers Hemp Inc. means business

The fledgling local industrial hemp industry was well represented at the Sustainable Futures Expo at the Lismore Show, with both Klara Marosszky (pictured) and Dr Keith Bolton providing input.

As well as giving illustrated talks and workshops, they mustered a good deal of interest in not only hemp farming, but also in developing a hemp grower's organisation.

The name Northern Rivers Hemp Inc was decided upon at an 80-strong meeting in Lismore earlier this year, held to support the formation of a not-for-profit organisation to assist the establishment of the local hemp industry.

Since then, an application was registered with the Department of Fair Trading, and the organisation's name has been approved.

The inaugural meeting of Northern Rivers Hemp Inc. was held on 25th October, at which a committee was formally elected, and will now establish a website, and begin disseminating information to members.

Membership for the organisation will range from \$20 - \$30 per year, and membership is required to become a voting member.

Please direct enquiries to Keith Bolton, 6621-5123 [keith@ecotechnologyaustralia.com](mailto:keith@ecotechnologyaustralia.com) or Klara Marosszky [hempmasonry@y7mail.com](mailto:hempmasonry@y7mail.com)



## Messenger

The rainforest smells like a casserole

A living aroma

The welcoming committee: a flock of leaches

"Come in: we only want a snack"

I oblige:

A small fee to pay for entering living tapestry

Canopy sunlight: sleeping bearded vines

Six tall stones wearing moss pyjamas

Had stopped for morning tea

The hitchhiking leaches: still munching away

At the waterfall: in a shallow pool

Immaculately dressed: in his finest scales

Half submerged

A carpet python: thick as one of my legs

Watching my infra red heat

Sitting on a stone chair: at a coward's distance

I admire the reptile radiance:

Coiled like a bodhisttva

The guardian: gatekeeper: of the forest

I was completely safe:

Alive with salvation

Fear unknown

Two sentient beings: polite: curious

Listening to the water on the musical rocks

The sound of women giggling in a group

The leaches took what they needed

Then caught a lift home

Many things have I neglected in this rebirth

I have forgotten to be honest

Haven't saved any money

At all

I've never forgotten that summer in the

rainforest

Or the kindness of that

Messenger

The carpet python

Trevor Thomas

## Rainforest Information Centre

### • November 7-9 Deep Ecology Workshop, Byron Bay

As a benefit for the reforestation of the sacred mountain Arunachala in Southern India, John Seed will be conducting an experiential deep ecology workshop in Byron Bay the weekend of November 7-9.

### • Saturday November 8

Music concert at Starseed Gardens, Byron Bay with Murray Kyle and friends, 7.30, by donation. Will also include two short films - Earth Spirit Action and Reweaving Shiva's Robes.



### • TREE Exhibit - Open Night Party

Serpentine Gallery on 17A Bridge Street, North Lismore November 7th @ 6pm. Fundraiser for southern forests of Tasmania (going to protest camp Still Wild Still Threatened) performance artists Heidi and Lazuli, Zoe, dj Jonathan and update by Ruth Rosenhek and others on campaign to protect Tassie Forests. Entry by donation. 30% of all sales will go to forest campaign.

### • Seeds Blong Everyone!

Film Launch Film-makers and gardeners are warmly invited to the local launch of the 57 minute movie on Tuesday November 11th at Byron Community Centre at 7.30 pm. Jude and Michel Fanton, two of



Byron's most passionate and creative souls have culminated years of food activism in a joyous new film. Filled with colour, music and wonderful local personalities, it is a rare insight into the village life of many cultures. Film clips can be found at [www.youtube.com/seedsavers](http://www.youtube.com/seedsavers) and [www.seedsavers.net](http://www.seedsavers.net)

### • Join the Flozza Foster Feral Program.

Logging in Florentine Valley is heating up. Support the protest camp. For more information, see [www.rainforestinfo.org.au/tasmania/tasmania.html](http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/tasmania/tasmania.html)

### New Films

• If you haven't seen it yet, check out our new film, Earth Spirit Action, at <http://tinyurl.com/4jltt3>

The film features Starhawk, Vandana Shiva, Ruth Rosenhek, John Seed and Matthew Fox speaking on Deep Ecology, Living Democracy and Revolution in Consciousness in a fast moving discussion of the type of change that needs to take place for a Sustainable Future. Includes beautiful nature footage and a colourful array of global action shots. (16mins)

• Important new film showing at Byron Cinema for the next two weeks, "Whale Dreamers" by Kim Kindersley with John Hurt, Julian Lennon and Jack Thompson. See [www.whaledreamers.com](http://www.whaledreamers.com)



## GRIST

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ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS FROM [WWW.GRIST.ORG](http://WWW.GRIST.ORG)

### Melbourne to Be Wild

Electric-car infrastructure coming to Australia

In just a few years, Aussies will be driving to and fro in electric vehicles, plugging in to a grid powered entirely by renewable energy. At least, that's the goal of California-based startup Better Place, which is heading Down Under to put its ambitious vision for an electric-car future into action. Some \$671 million, raised with the help of Macquarie Capital Group, will put in place hundreds of thousands of charging and battery-swap stations by 2012; utility AGL Energy has pledged to expand capacity to power the electric-car grid with 100 percent renewable energy. Better Place founder Shai Agassi, who is already testing his infrastructure model in Israel and Denmark, says he can easily see the scheme to hook up Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney replicated for Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Declares Agassi, "[W]e believe that Australia could be a demonstration project and proof-point for the U.S., as well as the U.K. and the rest of the developed world."

### Little Juiced Cooper

Electric Mini Cooper coming to the U.S.

What's cute and teeny and charged up? An electric Mini Cooper, which BMW will unveil at the Los Angeles Auto Show in November. Even more exciting -- especially if you are among "select private and corporate customers" -- a 500-vehicle test fleet will be available for lease in California, New Jersey, and New York early next year. While the creatively named Mini E will be manufactured in the United Kingdom and Germany, BMW is still mum on specific plans for a European release. The two-seater Mini E takes about eight hours to fully charge, then can travel 150 miles before needing to be juiced up again. It has a top speed of 95 miles per hour and looks just like a regular Mini -- except for the none-too-subtle electric plug painted on the roof.

### Arctic Tock ...

Arctic ice may be gone in one to three decades

If you've been planning a trip to the Arctic, better buy your tickets now, because it's a-meltin' fast. (Perhaps you've heard?) A record low amount of ocean froze over this winter -- a reduction of over 115,000 square miles of sea ice from last year. Researcher Walt Meier of the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center says there is "a good chance" that the Arctic has reached a tipping point: ice decline has accelerated since 2003, and if the trend continues, the Arctic could be ice-free by 2030. The U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in California plans to publish computer simulations showing that in summertime the Arctic could be ice-free within a decade. Loss of ice could have a huge impact on Arctic animals like polar bears (not to mention Santa Claus). Said Meier, "If we are heading for an ice-free Arctic, it's a really dramatic change and something that is unprecedented almost within the entire record of human species." Eek.

### For Peat's Sake

Deal reached to halt deforestation on Sumatra

Indonesian authorities have agreed to halt deforestation on the island of Sumatra, which has lost about half of its forest cover to logging since 1985. Conservationists joined Sumatran tigers, orangutans, rhinos, and elephants in applauding the deal, launched at the World Conservation Congress being held this week. Deforestation has increased the impact of flooding and forest fires on the island, not to mention cramping the style of the 200 mammal species and 580 bird species that live there: in one of Sumatra's 10 provinces, the elephant population has dropped 84 percent and the tiger population 70 percent in the last 20 years. In addition, more than 13 percent of the island's trees grow in peat, which stores vast amounts of carbon that would be let loose if the trees were removed.

### Come Trade With Me, Let's Trade, Let's Trade Away

European Union will require airlines to join carbon-trading program

Airlines flying within the borders of the European Union will be required to participate in a pollution-permit trading system to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions starting in 2012, the E.U. ruled on Friday. The decision ticked off the U.S. and the airline industry.

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# IT crowd oppose "Great Firewall of Australia"

## No "CLEAN" FEED PLEASE

by Jay Stevens

You may have heard about plans to introduce so-called "clean feed" internet in Australia.

"Clean feed" is a mealy-mouthed way of saying "censored". Currently, ACMA maintains a list of banned and illegal web sites, and (generally) ISPs do not allow access to those web sites. The planned "clean feed" is another matter entirely.

Telecoms minister Stephen Conroy has tried to compare the planned filtering system to technologies already in place elsewhere in the world, but he's not comparing apples with apples: First, schemes like those in place in the UK or NZ focus only on child porn.

Second, in all current filtering schemes in democratic countries, ISP participation is optional. Only here in Australia is mandatory filtering to be imposed (and yet senator Conroy scoffs when his plan is compared with China's "great firewall")!

When the filtering scheme was first mooted, a similar approach to that taken by New Zealand was suggested - ISPs could opt in, or allow end users to opt in or out. This line has now changed dramatically - there will now be a two-tier system: There will be a first, mandatory filter of all content deemed illegal (by exactly who is unclear - an ACMA subcommittee? And how can we appeal to be allowed to see content we cannot know exists?), and a second, an optional filter to block pornography if requested.

The lab trials already conducted by ACMA (see [bit.ly/cleanfeed-tests](http://bit.ly/cleanfeed-tests)) have narrowed the field to six

possible filtering technologies, following initial trials in Tasmania in February 2008; so live field trials, and then filtered internet for the whole of Australia, is probably less than 12 months away.

When challenged, Conroy's office has accused those opposed to internet censorship of holding "extreme views" (see [bit.ly/extreme-free-views](http://bit.ly/extreme-free-views)) which is a non-argument and a familiar cop-out: It is by no means extreme to fear that once the filtering technology is in place, it will act as a gradually tightening noose, each increment barely noticeable and easy to justify and "explain".

Child pornography is the current excuse; terrorists using the web for communication may be the next. Either way, if what we end up with is a Chinese style great firewall, and netizens scared to comment on blogs and forums, then the terrorists will have won.

There are some very real privacy concerns about this technology as well. ACMA's own report claims most of the tested filters can filter HTTPS traffic. In other words, the filtering software is reading every one of your bank passwords and transactions before deciding they are legitimate traffic and do not need to be blocked.

The problem here is one of due process and that old, un-trendy concept called "innocent until proven guilty". Under various laws that limit freedom of speech, you can be prosecuted for what you have said or published, after the event. A dangerous line is being crossed with the proposed clean feed - certain kinds of expression are about to be deemed so dangerous that no-one will be allowed

to hear them and decide for themselves if they should be allowed.

It probably is too late to prevent the planned filter from being switched on. It's not too late to try and preserve some sanity though. If you have any legal, technical, moral or just plain commonsense argument against this plan, then either take action online (see <http://nocleanfeed.com>) or write to senator Conroy's office and detail it!

This letter ([bit.ly/letter-to-conroy](http://bit.ly/letter-to-conroy)) is a good model - and the writer's conclusion is one I can't improve upon myself: "The 'clean feed' proposal is impossible to defend on technical, moral, financial and public policy grounds".

## PROTEST LETTER by Peter Godden

I sent the following (edited) letter to Stephen Conroy, Minister for Communications, on 20th October and haven't had a reply back, so thought I'd share it with NGT readers in the land of the free-ish.

Dear Sir,  
I am totally against mandatory ISP filtering of internet communications. Your proposal reeks of New World Order or Chinese dictatorship.

• It will slow the internet down considerably.

• It will make parents of children believe that they have no personal responsibility to supervise their children, as big brother is now looking after them (not).

• It will cost money that would be better spent

educating parents and children, and law enforcement.

• It is a slippery slope indeed when the government starts to make decisions (clandestinely) about what is legal, distasteful, and ultimately politically incorrect.

• It can be bypassed by the technically savvy.

• It undermines people's confidence in secure communications, including financial transactions.

• You give the impression that there will be an opt-out for people who consider themselves to be discerning adults, but this is untrue and misleading as the opt-out option is also filtered.

• It does not include torrents, peer to peer, or onion routing.

• Worst of all, it continues the Howard tradition of media-driven scare mongering

and using the rare bad example (kiddie porn perverts, terrorists, or Labor voters) to implement this kind of draconian and fascist law.

• It opens the way to a commercialised internet, whose main aim is, like commercial media, to gain money and power and screw the people. (Isn't that what the Bush bank bailouts are about?)

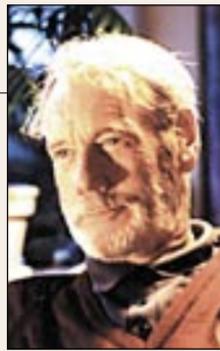
Overwhelmingly IT people are against this kind of proposal. The experts you must be listening to are the IT equivalent of yesterday's derivative merchant bankers.

Tell 'em they're dreamin'... and please do not give in to small minded and misguided control freaks.

• See [www.whirlpool.net.au](http://www.whirlpool.net.au) "ISP Level Filtering Discussion Forum" to get some good info on the topic.

## Commonsense Human Values

Nineteenth  
in a series by  
Laurie Stubbs



This article begins a trial set of values based on the principle Life Develops Itself (LDI).

It starts with how we relate to life and our planet, goes on in the next two articles to how we can think about ourselves. Overall, the sample set looks at three vital areas of a persons life in society. First it deals with an individual, then extends LDI based values to the family, then the group.

The whole set demands careful appraisal. It is extensive and complex, far more so than the "Ten Commandments". But it deals with life and values on a vastly overpopulated planet, and one where there are technological "haves" and the undeveloped "have nots". These are very different conditions to those of Moses' time.

Change of human direction is the objective of this value set. Action to eliminate species-threatening issues and problems rests on change in individual and collective values. Given that the new values look as though they go in the right direction and, that "what we are doing now" is creating disasters, then the new set is worth considering.

The first small group of values is about "Being", and "Earth" - how it is to be alive, how we relate to our planet.

**Being alive is to be full of joy.**

The first statement in the group sets the tone for the whole value set. In a sense it is the motherhood statement from which all the rest flow. Life is

full of joy because that's how the LDI principle translates into every life, producing an inbuilt sense of fulfilment and meaning. Article 9 examined the evidence for this statement and gave us a conclusion that joyfulness is a mechanism by which life's purposiveness is expressed. (Revisiting that article now would make sense.) Joyfulness underpins a positive attitude; which establishes powerful links with people and things and so creates beneficial outcomes not available to other outlooks. We'll explore this after we've got the sample set spelled out.

**Living is an emotionally full experience.**

The human condition uses all emotions. Suppressing or denying emotions distorts human balance. There will always be people who have more or less than a 'normal range' of emotional experience; such diversity is natural in life. Labelling emotions good, or bad are attempts to steer emotional experience, and lead to troubles which divert life energy. Full emotional experience leads to balanced people in tune with themselves. Natural selection's processes (and therefore the LDI principle) are better served with emotionally developed people. Article 2 touches on this material.

**Humanity is a part of the changing stream of life.**

"Change is the only certainty" is repeated often enough so it is probably an axiom by now. It is vital to have this concept replace that of 'permanence' as a living value. In the longer run the statement is an affirmation of a basic truth of natural selection. Having this affirmation in the value system steers outlooks so that energy is not wasted in seeking the impossible, -- stability and permanence. Acceptance of this truth

will direct energy into coping with change; may help to set up methods to steer changes; and both these are in better synchronisation with the LDI principle than any attempt to prevent or deny change.

**Respect all living things.**

Diversity is a fundamental of life's capacity to develop itself. Diversity is the pool from which all streams run, the reservoir of potential, the assurance that there is a future for life. No life form is sacrosanct. All existing life forms at some time can be under threat. However it is unlikely that all life forms would be under threat at the same time. Therefore, respect for all living things is basic. This value might have been written "Marvel at all forms of life" Humanity may have lots of answers but is still restricted to creating only human life, and only by the process nature gave us.

**Allow all living things whatever is needed for their lives.**

Existence is a threshold. Having come into existence any form of life has status which entitles it to whatever is needed to sustain its life. Humanity, as the self styled 'leader of creation' must accept all other forms of life. A key concept is living things will change forms naturally as life develops itself and must be accepted as part of the outflow of diversity. Human interference with the natural course of events may be fraught with species threatening dangers. Eons of successive and successful generations must be the ultimate test of any tinkering mankind may do. Natural selection has done a reasonable job over vast time till now. Can we usurp the role of natural wisdom and make changes to suit ourselves? It sounds very chancy.

Next month we'll look at the rest of this first set of LDI values.

Debbie Guest

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# The Empire Is Falling *Let's get the story straight*

by Rob Bruce

The imperial wars of conquest, the rampant and apocalyptic land and resource grabs we are witnessing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan (the black-ops boys are in there already), Iran (soon) and elsewhere, are the inevitable consequences of the capitalist system that requires an ever increasing supply of raw materials and enforced labour to feed its insatiable hunger.

These conquests, like all of the major wars of the twentieth century, are totally engineered, and are the brainchild of the existing banking cartels, the Wall Street criminals, and their agents within the Federal Government of the USA, and that of its allies, state and trans-national. The current financial crisis on Wall Street and the blatant, audacious theft of the public purse by the Bush Regime has exposed these criminals for all to see.

Most sections of the mainstream media are willing participants in the neo-imperialist conquests of the age, and ensure a diet of banal, bourgeois mediocrity is served up in an endless barrage of mind-numbing triviality, decoy, white-wash and distraction. But in the occupied nations and territories, few are fooled. They are too close to the action to be duped.

Oh there are many well-paid and willing collaborators - puppets, oligarchs installed by the occupying imperial forces - who parrot the approved news and progress reports, and say all is well and good and as it ought to be. But the people, their beds burning, their children dead, the sky on fire, know the truth of the occupation only too well. They will deal with both puppets and the puppet masters in due course.

Within the empire, many are fooled. There exists a whole army of 'bewilderers'; school teachers, counsellors, case managers, mediators, G-men, officials and the like, to ensure we remain distracted, confused, confounded, harassed and buried beneath a mountain of paper-work, rules, fine print, litigation, licenses, by-laws, protocols, final notices, counseling sessions, workshops and so on. Yes, in the empire, many are bewildered.

The installed heads of state in Afghanistan and Iraq, both puppets of Washington, tell the world via an assembled and vetted, hand-picked media contingent, that the USA has saved their countries from the deplorable savages and terrorists, and brought light, democracy, liberty, fraternity and hope. In the west, deep inside the empire, the true believers, (are there any left?) nod earnestly, and conclude that it must be so.

Others, fat and contented upon the plunder of empire, don't care a damn if it so or not. Still others are too preoccupied with their debt, dues and social obligations to the state to even give it a moment's thought. Most of us suspect the lie, but are only too well aware of the coercive potential of the empire, and its willingness to snuff out internal dissent, so we say nothing.

But in the occupied nations and territories, and all throughout the tropical world, whenever America speaks of its desire to spread democracy, truth and justice, the people reach for their guns. They know

the USA and its allies too well to be fooled anymore, and they have heard it all before. They have heard it in The Philippines, in Korea, Indo-china, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, The Dominican republic, The Marshall Islands, Cuba, El Salvador, Colombia, Bolivia, Panama, Somalia, Palestine, etc.

Yes they know the empire. It is the same old empire, the Graeco-Roman Empire that never ever fell. But now it is falling for real, and the inhabitants of the tropical world everywhere are sharpening their knives, and loading their guns.

The empire is in its death throws, and like any dying beast, it seeks to lash out and drag whomever it can down with it. Let it fall. Let a real rain come and wash things clean. Let the beast die. In reality, it is almost dead already. It needs but one last breath of wind and it will topple into pieces. One need only look at the USA, Britain and Europe in all their decay, fear and loathing to know this.

Let the wind blow. Let us return to the garden, and to the society of nature. Let something bold and real arise from the ashes of Amerika. Let us not try to help save it. It is finished, and can only sink us with it if we insist upon holding fast to it, and to the comforts and protection it afforded us, its sons and daughters, for our silence and our complicity in its crimes. Let the empire burn, for it is and always was a tyranny. To aid in its preservation would be a crime.

The empire was corrupted from the very beginning and has no place in this bold new unfolding of the human spirit. Let the machines fail. Let those sacred institutions collapse, for they were not really sacred after all. Let the icons and the towers fall. Let the bills go unpaid. Let the banks - those holy temples where the mammon is worshipped - burn. Let the people dance and sing upon the ashes of what was old and vile and over-ripe for disintegration.

by SoulJuice

Australia is well placed in this world. Being removed from the rest of our traditional 'western' base in the northern hemisphere has its advantages.

Up 'til relatively lately we have been one degree removed from direct control, and our rebellious-convict-heritage has served us well in not tolerating charlatanry and aiming for 'fair go egalitarianism' in our society.

As we are slowly learning the true story by digging deeper than the official government line, of what our short history involves - particularly concerning the Aboriginal story, we mature as a country.

It has taken 'til now for the true story to emerge into the mainstream. 'Sorry' has finally been voiced - but that's all and we all know how words are cheap. We still wait for the government to walk its talk on Aboriginal issues. I don't think I'll hold my breath....

Just to get things in more focus, let us briefly take a broader look at what happened before 230 odd years ago at what was happening in Britain and Europe then.

There seems to have been a time in history before Britain and Europe colonized Australia that anyone not toeing the church line was persecuted or killed. For many years, men and women were killed for following the 'nature connection' - Paganism being one of the main culprits. The pagans through the Celts and others had a life view that was loosely similar to the Aboriginal way of 'connection to country' and a 'deeper knowledge of things.'

The fact is that what our forefathers did to the Ab/originals when they came here had already been prosecuted mainly through the church on our own race before other countries were colonized.

The point is that we all suffer under the

same regime that has been running with the same agenda long before Australia began.

The only big difference being that our kin were systematically wiping people out under the name of witchcraft.

The church appeared to have a bent, all through its history, of crushing any other spiritual understanding of God, the Source/Creator/Spirit or what ever you choose to call 'the indescribable', and that obviously included Aboriginal Spirituality.

Despite centuries of attempted cultural genocide, Aboriginal people have maintained the links to the nature spirits of the Earth and are one of the only peoples left who hold the secrets that were wiped largely from our bloodlines back in those dark days of inquisition of roughly the 1200s onwards.

The twenty-first century - with all its so-called sophistication and modernity, is still served up to us as a 'survival of the fittest' modality.

Fairly unbridled survival-of-the-fittest/ male inspired competition has now apparently realised what we've all been picturing and has driven the western marketplace to its ever-more apparent oblivion.

Has that all looked very 'civilised' to you? Stranger than truth though it is, the Ancient Aboriginal race of Australia still exist to this present age because of co-operation and working in harmony with each other and everything around them.

Why must we so-called westerners be so competitive all the time?

Is that what REALLY drives us? If it is a 'survival of the fittest' world we live in, does that mean that the Mining Companies are 'the fittest' - as they gouge out our Australian soil and sell it daily? Whatever happened to co-operation and sharing the wealth?

It's a funny juxtaposition really, when one thinks of one of - if not THE oldest surviving race on the planet to this day - witnessing the fastest rate of extinction of plants and animals on Earth going on right beside them in only 230-odd years - and White Australia is not even aware (much) of the treasure of wealth of ancient knowledge regarding what is known in some circles as 'the law of one' or 'natural law'.

We all - white and black, animal, insect or plant - have all been ripped off!

Anyway, at present it all doesn't seem to matter so much anymore, what with daily reports of market dives.

As the wise old Aborigine always knew, and the hippies foresaw thirty years ago, it appears that all the pigeons are finally 'coming home to roost'. The top-heavy-greed model economic system we have existed under 'til now is falling.

Hopefully our experiences when we left to seek 'something more sustainable' have equipped us sufficiently for what is to come.

Many of us came here as convicts because we attempted to take things into our own hands to survive with some unfortunately illegal 'bold initiatives'.

It's obviously time to take control of our own lives and steer our families through these times to calmer waters. Meanwhile....

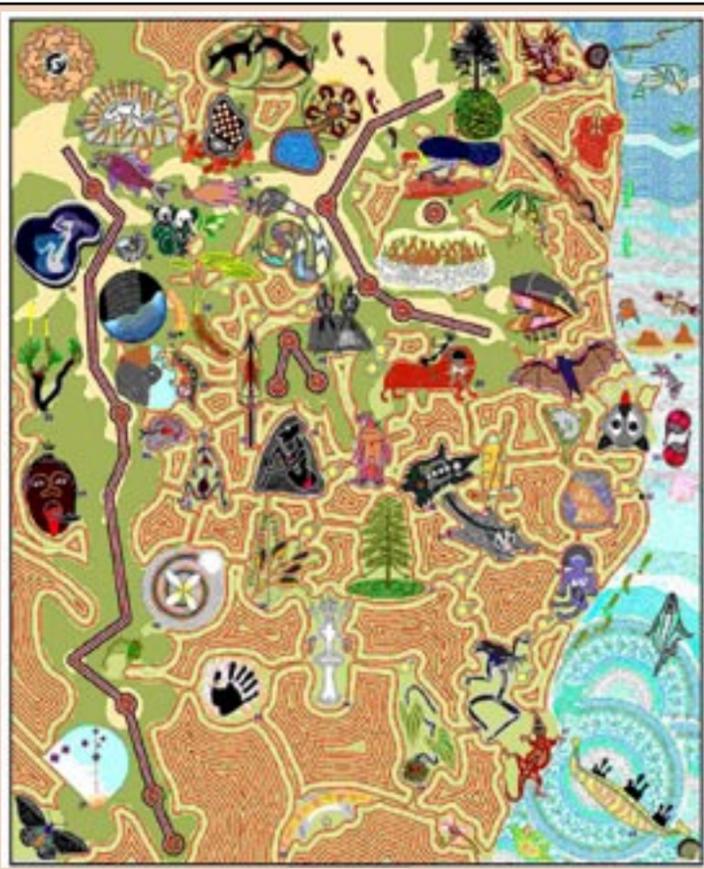
Hold onto your hat and surf that wave! Let's ride this baby home now!!

## Spirit Map

*Spirits in the rocks, trees and mountains,* by Michael Smith of Koonorigan, is a map of the spiritual energy embedded in the landscape, according to the Bundjalung aborigines who still live there.

Michael has permission from the Bundjalung Elders' Council to print and display this spirit map, which was featured in the recent Aquarius Exhibition at Lismore Regional Art Gallery, and was a finalist in this year's Country Energy Art Prize for Landscape Painting.

Michael says all landscapes have their own stories and power.





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# Homeopathics etc

by Tarang Bates

**N**imbin – a lush green valley, surrounded by hills and mountains. Many of us depend on rain and spring water and need to apply for a new license, every 5 years or so.

Coca Cola is gaining a reputation around the world for snapping up spring licenses, so it is important not to allow yours to lapse. Last month they were granted a spring license on the central coast (despite community and environmental concerns), to pump 66 million litres of water for their bottled water industry, which is worth \$10 million a year. For this license they pay around \$200.

Another thing – where do all the trillions and billions of dollars go when they disappear off the stock exchange, and re-appear days later?? And how about this? When Parliament sits, it costs \$11,000 - that's eleven thousand dollars – for one minute!!!

Is there a parallel universe, where all the bizarre occurrences, mindsets and decisions hang out, only to appear randomly just long enough for us to scratch our heads and wonder ...why?... how can this be?

To something a little more in my realm of comprehension are the "Ig Nobel Awards":

- The Ig Nobel Peace award: for adoption of the legal principle that plants have dignity.
- The Ig Nobel Economics award: for showing that lap dancers are given more tips when they are ovulating.
- The Ig Nobel Physics award: for proving that hair and string will almost always become tangled, given half a chance.
- The Ig Nobel Nutrition



award: for proving that people will eat stale chips of varying degrees and believe that they are fresh, as long as they hear a crunchy sound.

**I**n case this has all boggled your brain or got you all depressed, this month's homeopathics may be what you need.

**KALIPHOS** is a homeopathic that is used for depression and anxiety, nervousness, memory loss. Nightmares and insomnia, where you lie awake with your mind racing. It is also used as a mineral colloid and is called *potassium phosphate*, often combined with *magnesium phosphate* (PPMP) used for the same problems as the homeopathic form, to treat the nervous system, muscular tension, headaches, cramps and spasms.

**SEPIA** is used for nervous states, irritability, and sadness. The person may have a sense of helplessness and confusion feeling over sensitive, easily offended, defeated and depressed. Literally worn out with cares.

**IGNATIA** is used for depression which comes on as a result of grief after a loved one dies, or a partner leaves. Mental and physical exhaustion, oversensitive and nervous. Highly emotional, moody, alternating crying and laughter. Insomnia and fear, that you would never sleep again.

For more information on Homeopathics contact Tarang at Nimbin Homeopathics, 6689-1452.

# Sister Yeshe at Birth and Beyond

by Lisa Billings

**D**ressed in sombre garments Sister Yeshe Chodron commanded subtle attention in the Birth and Beyond room. A small, demure group collected around her. The door was left ajar for latecomers as the evening fell steadily in the Nimbin valley on a Wednesday night last October.

Sister Yeshe grew up in Australia and revisits these shores on tour from India to promote her book *Everyday Enlightenment: How to be a Spiritual Warrior at the Kitchen Sink*. She integrates Buddhist philosophies with her life story and personal experience.

Throughout her journey as spiritual warrior, she has wandered the streets of Sydney and India with only a begging bowl.

Feeling at the edge of things throughout her adolescence, Sister Yeshe followed the hippy trails in Northern New South Wales and left for Asia where she encountered Buddhism in India and Nepal. She responded to its philosophy and in 1994 became a Buddhist nun in the Tibetan Vajrayan tradition.

Sister Yeshe teaches 'I am not my suffering'.

Our lives are stages towards Enlightenment interspersed by Karma. Suffering is integral on the path to Enlightenment. When we die, we leave behind the body and our worldly possessions, but we take with us the mind. Through focus on the breath and meditation, the mind becomes disciplined.

With compassion Sister Yeshe practices her commitment to Enlightenment.

This compassion involves working with Indian Buddhists - a social class in India identified as the



Sister Yeshe Chodron

untouchables - in association with the Kalyanimitra Fund.

The Kalyanimitra Fund provides funds for Indian Buddhists in education and training. From this assistance, these people can gain secure economic means to support present and future generations.

Indian Buddhists live in Nagpur, an isolated place away from the usual tourist trail in the Maharashtra state. Around 1956, under the guidance of Doctor Ambedkar, the untouchables converted to Buddhism to escape the harsh rigours of the Hindu caste system. The untouchables were treated as slaves in past generations experiencing human rights abuses.

At the evening's conclusion, there were small trinkets were for sale: prayer flags, miniature carvings of the Buddha and incense. All proceeds go to the Kalynamitra Fund.

I left Sister Yeshe feeling engaged and ponderous about the meaning of Enlightenment and my own experience with Buddhism. Upon the awning of the Birth and Beyond building, Burri Jerome's representation of the Buddha suspends in a perpetual cycle of Enlightenment.

# Ayurvedic Info

**H**i! This month, we thought we'd talk about Ayurvedic cosmology. Everything in existence comes from a universal Cosmic Consciousness. This then manifests as male and female energy, Purusha and Prakruti, which are present in everything. Purusha is formless and beyond attributes, beyond space and time, cause and effect. Prakruti is that which gives form, the Divine Mother which births all of creation. The universe is an expression of their love.

From this comes the first expression which is Mahat, intelligence or cosmic order. In humans, this is referred to as Buddhi. Next is Ahamkar, or ego, which is the sense of self or identity from where we think, act and react. Ahamkar then expresses itself in the three universal qualities: Sattva – stability, purity, light and the connection to the Infinite; Rajas – dynamic movement and causes sensations, feelings and emotions; Tamas – the dark principle, leads towards inertia, ignorance and allows us to sleep. A balance of all three is required to exist and an imbalance leads to disease. These then manifest on the physical plane as the five elements, or Panchamahabhutas: ether, air, fire, water and earth. These in combination become the three doshas: Vata (ether & air); Pitta (fire & water); Kapha (water & earth) which form everyone's constitutions. (see last 3 months' articles for further explanation of the doshas)

## The Elements

Ether, sometimes referred to as space, is empty, light, subtle, all pervading, omnipresent, universal and formless. It is associated with sound and the sense of hearing. We need space in order to move, grow, live and communicate. Spaces in the body are: mouth, nose, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, abdomen and thorax. Psychologically, space gives freedom, peace and expansion of consciousness and is responsible for love and compassion. In the negative, we experience feelings of separation, isolation, ungroundedness, insecurity, anxiety and fear.

Air is light, dry, clear and mobile. Air is electrical energy – the electron in an atom moves because of the air element. It is formless but can be perceived by touch which is its associated sense. Air is movement which expresses itself in the body as the muscle movement; pulsations of the heart; expansion and contraction of the lungs; nerve and sensory impulses; and the movement of the intestines. Thought, desire and will are governed by the air principle which gives us happiness, joy, freshness and excitement. The negative aspects are fear, anxiety, insecurity and nervousness.

These two elements combine in the Vata dosha and exemplify the conditions associated with balance and imbalance of it.

Next month we'll talk more in depth about the other elements.

John and Helen are available for consultations and treatments at Birth and Beyond on Thursdays. Bookings can be made through the Nimbin Apothecary on 66891529 or by ringing John on 6689-1794 or Helen on 6689-1717. Home visits are available.

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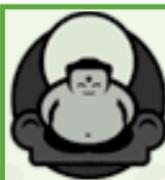
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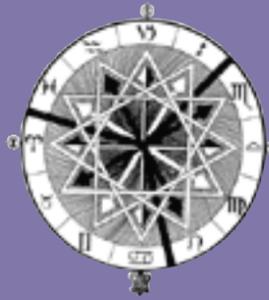
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# Why all the fuss about... Contraceptive Herbs?

by Lynne Oldfield

There's been quite a lot of comment on female reproduction in the last few issues of *The GoodTimes*. As someone who has been interested in herbal contraception all my life, and used myself to experiment on, I would like to inform people it does work and there are many possibilities of different herbs that can accomplish the task.

Until the Inquisition in Europe, women have always had access to the Treasure Chest of nature for their needs. After the great witch-hunts of the Middle Ages and its successful repression of many female European herbalists, Western culture and its various religions have wreaked havoc on indigenous cultures around the world, physically and ethically, in the same way.

The original suppression of wise women and their knowledge of natural contraception was to do with the values of the Catholic Church which are still current: "Breed as many children of The Lord as possible". The Catholic religion is still against contraception and abortion but as these are now in widespread use in our society, including the 'morning after' pill, I don't see why there should be such a hue and cry about contraceptive herbs.

Why should herbalists be paranoid, due to the authorities, about releasing information about herbs which can bring on a miscarriage?

The other day in Lismore a friend told me about how a friend involved in indigenous studies, including the care of artifacts, said that in one instance in Australia they found a headpiece made of plant matter which included contraceptive plants. These sharp pointed seeds in the headpiece were designed to release substances and act as a contraceptive rather than an abortifacient.

I've heard other stories about mildly intoxicating plants in Australia that were chewed but if swallowed acted as a contraceptive or abortifacient. I did a lot of research on this for years and

indigenous women all over the world had their own plants and methods to look after themselves. I remember one quoted North American woman saying that of course they used contraceptive herbs as typically they could be on the move and it was physically impossible to have a large number of children to care for. In other instances in Africa I have read where the custom was for the man to go back to residing in the man's village until a child turned four so maybe there were some places that missed out on such plants.

Still, the only things offered to modern women are chemicals, even though the original moral reason is now redundant. It's about time we had some action on this as a lot of our troubles in Nimbin with various herbs are psychologically based in the old fear paradigm set in motion by the Catholic Church so many centuries ago.

The repression of women and their independence in their private world of women's business was systematically undertaken by the Catholic Church. There were so many allegations of witchcraft and fears towards indigenous people and their practices carried on by the authorities with the help of many different churches. This fear of magic was the basis of banning their culture. As far as the white people were concerned it was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

A lot of practices of indigenous people around the world kept human population quite low. To the hypocritical purified rarity of 18th and 19th century people they may have appeared ghastly, but sometimes strong measures are called for. So unless all men on the planet refrain from spreading their semen, it's up to women to do what needs to be done. (There is some relevant moral argument that secret men's knowledge and the skills and powers to control their semen has also been taken away by the forces of the church in the Middle Ages so that in a perfect world there would be no need for contraception at all.)

My choice after experiencing the bad effects of modern contraception was to

look for the herbal secret. I had some hair-raising experiences due to late application of the herbs, which can cause the process to be more like a serious miscarriage, but knowing my stuff as a serious researcher I put my legs up high, took some homeopathic Arnica and sent for some uterus strengthening herbs. I risked my life, but the crisis passed.

Recently the ABC showed a documentary on inventors of various vaccinations, and they not only endangered themselves but they were responsible for other people's deaths. So, I'm just the typical medical researcher.

I think it's always better to use herbs; I can't stand this chemical medicine world that is forced on us. I have always found modern contraceptive methods to be so destructive. For a long time as I watched rising world populations, I was paranoid that we would be forcefully sterilized, which to me as a passionate believer that women's business is some sort of sacred reality that we're neglecting, should never happen.

Climate change is not just about energy emissions, it's also about going back to old ways that have been successful for thousands of years but have been driven out of world consciousness in order for the economy and marketplace to profit. The modern medical and pharmaceutical industry is a huge drain and expense on the environment and really it is some giant ego trip against nature where we're trying to say human inventions are superior to what Mother Nature provides. That is just not necessarily true at all.

As an amateur healer and herbalist I always had a lot of knowledge to draw on and I did take risks. In reality, as most women aren't so knowledgeable these days, it would be good to have access to an herbal practitioner. I have heard some horrible stories about the effects of the 'morning after' pill available from the pharmaceutical profession.

I had no bad effects from taking the herbs I took if I took them early. I think it is time that herbal contraception came out into the open. It is not an old wives' tale but a victim of the great persecution of women that belongs to patriarchal societies which is still going on to this day.

# Wrinkle Prevention

by Cheryl Beasley

There are many factors that contribute to the development of wrinkles and with this knowledge you can do a lot to prevent them from forming in the first place.

Free radicals are molecules that lead to the degeneration of collagen, a protein found in the skin that keeps it elastic and healthy-looking. Free radicals are found in the UV radiation in sunlight, smoking and air pollution.

Changes in hormones also produce changes in the skin. Menopause and decreased estrogen production can affect the skin's elasticity and also cause fine lines.

Muscle use, including everyday expressions like frowning and smiling, also leads to wrinkles while the effects of gravity loosen the skin, causing it to sag.

## How Wrinkles Form

As we age, the cells in the epidermis (the outer layer of the skin that protects us from the elements) become increasingly thin and decreasingly sticky. As a result, our aging skin becomes thinner and drier; cells divide more slowly, meaning that the natural repairing mechanisms in the skin work less quickly.

Changes also occur in the dermis, the second layer of the skin, where the connective tissue is found. The connective tissue controls the strength and elasticity of the skin, as well as the proteins found in it.

## Wrinkle-Fighting Foods

Foods that are high in antioxidants help counteract a decrease in collagen, elasticity and firmness in aging skin.

Tomatoes are an excellent wrinkle prevention food because they contain lycopene, a substance that also decreases the risk of developing cancer. Red capsicums have lots of Vitamin A and E, as well as bioflavonoids, which moisturise and heal the skin. Beetroot and carrots (and other red and dark orange vegetables) are also great foods to consume if you want to prevent wrinkles. Try using them in juices.

Blueberries are another excellent source of antioxidants.

Salmon contains a high amount of omega-3 fatty acids that reduces inflammation and lubricates the skin.

It's also important not to



smoke and try to drink four to six glasses of water a day in order to keep your skin looking young and wrinkle free.

## Sunscreen

Proper skin care is central to the prevention of lines and wrinkles.

UVA and UVB exposure causes 90% of all symptoms of premature skin aging, including wrinkles.

While sunscreen is a woman's best weapon against developing wrinkles, most women don't apply enough, apply it frequently enough or use a high enough level of UV protection.

Most people apply only 25 to 30% of the recommended amount of sunscreen. Sunscreen should be applied liberally, and should cover all parts of the body, including ears, hands and feet.

Sunscreen should be applied every two to four hours. Experts recommend using sunscreen with protection against UVA and UVB exposure and with a minimum SPF of 15.

With these simple tips you can help your skin fight the signs of aging easily and healthily.

BIO: Cheryl Beasley is the founder of LanaB Skin Care, an online natural skin care business that produces fresh and pure products. LanaB's range includes natural creams and lotions for all the body, delicious scrubs, balms, sulphate free bubble bath, hydrosols and more. Find them at [www.lanab.com.au](http://www.lanab.com.au)



# Cook's corner

## Recipe of the Month

by Carolyne



## Flamed Chicken and Avocado

Beautiful avocados are at the peak of season now. Chicken livers may be omitted, but do try them, they add a lovely delicate flavor.

### Ingredients

6 filleted chicken breasts  
6 tablespoons finely chopped shallots  
60g butter

4 tablespoons brandy  
4 egg yolks  
200g button mushrooms  
1½ cups white wine  
2 teaspoons pickled peppercorns  
2 large avocados sliced  
2 cups cream  
150g chicken livers (optional)

### Method

Poach chicken livers in white wine, adding a little more if it evaporates during cooking time, this should take about 5 minutes on each side. When cooked, keep fillets warm in a casserole dish.

Add shallots and peppercorns to remaining wine in pan and reduce to about 1 cup.

Melt butter in a frying pan and add avocado slices to warm through, gently remove avocado slices and

add to chicken. Slice chicken livers, fry in the butter till just cooked on both sides, add to the chicken, repeat process with the mushrooms. Warm brandy and add to remaining butter.

Ignite, and when flames subside, add cream and heat to just below boiling point. Remove from heat and allow to cool a little, add beaten egg yolks, then shallots and peppercorns and reduce wine liquid.

Gently incorporate all ingredients well and pour over warmed chicken and avocado.

Bake at 200° for approximately 15 minutes. Serve with buttered noodles or rice.

For more information call Carolyne at the Coffee House Nimbin. Phone 6689-0590.

Till next month, enjoy!





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