

Remembering Simone



On 12th February 2005 the German Backpacker Simone Strobel was reported missing in Lismore, while she was staying with her boyfriend and friends at a Lismore Caravan Park.

She was found dead on the 17th February 2005 under some palm fronds 90m (*Daily Telegraph*) or 200m (*Sun Herald*) away from the Caravan Park, through the use of a sniffer dog.

There was criticism of the police investigation, not only by her boyfriend and now main suspect Tobias Suckfuell, about the slow start to search for her as well as him being told by police that "she would probably turn up at Nimbin." (Erin O'Dwyer, *Sun Herald* 27/02/05)

Simone was known as a very responsible and reliable person in her hometown in Germany, where she worked in a kindergarten and everyone who had contact with her through her stay and time in and around Nimbin saw and felt that straight away. To assume that she would just leave Lismore with the next Nimbinite in the middle of the night would be an insult.

Seven weeks before this happened we saw on TV the urgent need for cooling equipment to keep the tsunami victims from decomposing before their identity was established. Lismore's temperatures were very similar and with so

many women gone missing in this area over the last 15 years, a lot of people feel that the Richmond Police Command should have acted with more urgency.

That Simone's black top was found on Uralba Street, the police not going public earlier and the dog finally brought in and finding the body soon after, left and continues to leave fear hanging over Lismore. The impact on Lismore residents, not only parents and young women, having security guards walking nurses down to their cars at night time etc. leaves a bad taste to this day.

The Northern Star had an article a few months ago, listing all these cases of missing women and stating that the police is not having enough manpower to follow them up over the years.

Seeing the police spending manpower, resources and a huge amount of money having the riot squad and the horse squad as well as undercovers and the normal police at MardiGrass, doing illegal strip searches along the road and lanes of Nimbin years ago and right next to the war memorial in Allsopp Park at last year's MardiGrass, it must make you wonder if they got their priorities right.

Name and address withheld at writer's request.

Overrated Nimbin

A short while ago, I saw our Lady Mayor being interviewed on TV. She hinted at an imminent rate rise above the normal pegged limit because of Lismore City Council's need for more money and said that "she was sure the residents would understand".

Well Ms Dowell, here is one ratepayer who is definitely **not** very

understanding. I live in Falls Road, Nimbin, and this year my rates would have been over \$1400 if not for a pension rebate. Like all the other residents in Falls Road, I have to collect my own water and dispose of my own wastes. There is no garbage pick-up service of course. Even worse, part of my rates goes to maintaining the local 'transfer station'. However, if I actually take garbage there, I am forced to pay the Tip Master \$7 for even the smallest amount of trash. I think this is Council gouging at its worst.

All I can really see for my \$1000 is an occasional bit of road maintenance but even here the Falls Road residents are being short-changed. The current contractor only operates a dinky little tow along roller which I think would hardly trouble a Pavlova! Consequently, the infamous Falls Road potholes usually reappear within a week and are bigger than ever after a month.

Frankly, I am getting very tired of paying large chunks of my pension to subsidise the creation of aquatic centres and (probably) art galleries that require a 60 kilometres round trip. If the Council would be prepared to spend more of my pension in Nimbin village itself, I would feel more charitable about the impending rate rise; otherwise I see it as nothing but another council rip-off.

Os Osborne
Nimbin

Greening Ballina

2010 promises to be an exciting year for Ballina Shire Council, with many community and environmental initiatives in the pipeline.

Two projects of special interest are establishing

Community Gardens and a Native Street Tree Planting Program. Community gardens are a great educational tool for individuals, community groups and schools. They enable people to grow organic vegetables on council owned land. People who want to be involved can contact Council and register their interest.

A native street tree planting program will add to the aesthetic beauty of our town. It will provide habitat for native animals and birds, deliver much needed shade for pedestrians and cyclists, and reduce the use of air conditioning in our cars. Once a street tree plan is in place, community and school groups can help with the actual planting.

Different streets can have different themes. The idea can raise awareness about local tree species. Information can be circulated about local plants with bush-tucker potential and medicinal qualities. What better way to connect with our local environment and indigenous culture?

As development pressures grow in Ballina and along the coast we must carefully balance the needs of our local environment with those of an expanding population.

The new Draft LEP (Local Environmental Plan) will soon be on public exhibition. This is the top planning instrument for the Shire. It provides the blueprint for environmental protection and guides all planning decisions through its zonings.

If you're interested in the future of our Shire I suggest you take a very close look at this important planning document when it gets on exhibition.

Cr Jeff Johnson
Lennox Head

Impartial Report?



I attended the Rally Review Meeting at the Murwillumbah Civic Centre, where around 150 anti-rally Green Cauldron defenders turned up compared to two proclaimed rally supporters.

If, as we are told, the rally was good for the area financially, where were all those pro-rally supporters? This was their chance to comment on how wonderful the rally experience was for them.

The larger than expected anti-rally turnout showed that if the rally circus dares to invade our green and pleasant land again, they will face much more opposition than before.

Hopefully the review, when tabled in parliament, will show how inappropriate a motor sport event is in the Mt Warning caldera area.

Mike Cahill claimed to be preparing an impartial report to present to government. I sincerely hope so, but his biased comment about MLC Greens member Ian Cohen "grandstanding in parliament" showed this to be unlikely.

Is this rally review process a genuine attempt at resurrecting the democratic process, or is it, as I suspect, merely going through the motions to satisfy parliament's obligation under the rules of the special legislation, hurriedly passed to allow this anachronistic, obnoxious and highly inappropriate event to take place?

Chris Degenhardt
Nobbys Creek

Notices

Wanted to rent

Local resident looking for 2-bedroom house within 15 kms of town, but anything considered. Reliable tenant with references. Experienced gardener and maintenance person. Part-time parent. Please call 0458-229-199.

For Lease

Heavy duty Indian Sugarcane crusher with motor in working order. Ideal for permanent site. Contact Gerhard, phone 6622-2081.

For Rent

86sqm building, Nimbin Community Centre. A/C, private access, from \$164pw. Available Feb. 2010. Email Expression of Interest to: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au

Yoga

Yoga classes starting up at Lilyfield community hall, next to Barkers Vale school. Every Wednesday, 9.30-11am, commencing 10th February. Suitable for all levels of experience. Contact April: 6689-7539

Learn to Live Green

TAFE Outreach course called Learn to Live Green at Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre one day a week starts Monday 22nd February. For more info contact Klara on 0422-750-612.

AGM

Mousetrap Media Inc. Saturday 20th February, 2pm at Nimbin News office, Nimbin Community Centre. Phone 6689-1184 for more details.

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Apply for further details and information package to ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au
Applications close 19th February 2010.



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Distribution: Angus, Alex, Coralie, Ben, Gabrielle & Warren (Bellingen), Dave (West End), Martin (Maleny), and Matt (Glebe).

Bookkeeper: Martha Paitson
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www.nimbingoodtimes.com

NGT is auspiced by the Nimbin Community School Co-operative Ltd.

Next deadline:
Wednesday 24th February

Email: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Please limit contributions to 600 words or less.

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At the Tuntable family dinner in January, dancers accompanied the Mediterranean plates provided by the genial Douvris family, who bring you delicious, healthy and affordable meals in a nice atmosphere, musicians welcome. Next is Sunday 28th February, from 5pm.

Also starting up January, Louise Grenfell is now providing sumptuous food and atmospheric music on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 5.30pm, featuring taste-packed Asian meals, pre-dinner nibbles and rich desserts. Next is Saturday 20th February..

Simon says...



by Simon Clough
Lismore City Councillor

I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2010.

I always find the Christmas/New Year period a great time for reflection and this "silly season" has been no exception.

I have been fortunate enough to spend a few days on our magnificent waterways whilst on holidays. We are incredibly blessed by our river system. It offers so many opportunities, whether swimming in the river (a beautiful 27 degrees), paddling our canoe or putting along in a little houseboat.

There is nothing better for the summer holidays. It's great waking up on the river with the sun cutting through morning mist, the birds chorusing and the lone commorant fishing like a smaller version of the Loch Ness monster.

I'm amazed that the river is so under utilised. It's unusual to see one other vessel out during the week. Having said that it's hard to ignore the out of control Indian coral trees, feral mulberry trees and the huge slumps in the banks that are brought on by deforestation and grazing.

As the representative of the Our Sustainable Future Party

(a very small local government party) on Lismore City Council I've been reflecting on priorities and achievements after more than one year on Council.

Lismore's community garden has been a long term priority of mine. I am excited that the garden is now well underway at the corner of Magellan and Brewster streets after we finally obtained land from Council. Rainbow Region Community Farms, which is the parent body has been very heartened by the general response from the community with over 200 people attending the open day as well as a very successful official opening. If you're interested in contributing please contact the garden at www.rrcf.org.au

As chair of Council's Sustainable Environment Policy Advisory Group, I am delighted with the Council's decision to create four full time jobs in the environment/sustainability area. In combination with the proposed environment levy, should the community accept it, this will assist Council in meeting long term environmental needs.

On the down side, the virtual failure of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference puts the ball squarely back with local communities to make a difference on carbon emissions. While I applaud the many people who have solar panels and hot water systems on their roofs I believe we also need to seriously reduce coal fired electricity infrastructure.

TransGrid, the State owned monopoly builder

and manager of electricity transmission lines in NSW, is planning to build a \$227m transmission line from Tenterfield to Lismore.

This proposal is based on a growth in demand of 46% in 7 years. I reckon you'd have to be giving away large air-conditioned dog kennels for that to be true. It seems like a move designed to sell us coal fired electricity whether we like it or not. TransGrid's proposed \$227m could create a huge investment in alternative energy!

It was heartening to read that Council is to get \$250,000 for solar panels, solar hot water systems, insulation and water tanks for its buildings. The \$6m interest free loan for 10 years for the southern trunk sewerage main is also very welcome. Perhaps there is a point to State governments after all!

I attended Lismore's Australia Day ceremony at the Goonellabah Sport and Aquatic Centre. I was impressed that at least 500 people attended and rather than being highly nationalistic as I feared, it was mainly about community and acknowledging those who contribute to its health and wellbeing. The recognition of all those who contribute to the huge diversity of our community was very moving.

This is the first time we've had the Community Recognition Awards, a much better idea than only having one or two people recognised as Lismore's Citizens of the Year. The citizenship ceremony was also inspiring. Twenty new Australian citizens were created including a refugee family of 9 from the Sudan.

Contact me on 6624-2894 or at simonclough@internod.on.net

From the Mayor's desk



by Jenny Dowell
Mayor of Lismore

Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au

The work of Council is due to commence as NGT hits the stands. Councillors have had a good break and are refreshed ready for the year ahead. January is filled with sporting events ranging from the Under 12 cricket festival to a trial game of rugby union between Queensland Reds and NSW Waratahs.

Lismore enjoys the opportunity to show off its good sporting facilities and visiting teams frequently comment on the beauty of our region and the friendliness of the locals.

Australia Day

Australia Day is one of the highlights of being Mayor of this fantastic community. It is a day of reflection on who we are and the vision we each hold for our future. More than 500 people gathered at Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre Council to recognise 80 people, young and old, who had been nominated for community awards. Deputy Mayor Cr Isaac Smith was a great MC and made sure everything ran smoothly. Lismore-born ex-Socceroo Craig Foster, our 2010 Australia Day Ambassador, spoke passionately about the advantages of growing up in Lismore and Thomas George talked about the pride with which his Lebanese parents adopted

Australian citizenship.

It was great to see Nimbin identities Pam Bourne and Eugenie Stephans recognised for their contributions to community. This year, LCC introduced categories of recognition including Good Neighbour, Environmental and Arts and Culture without a winner being singled out. Instead, all nominees received a gift and certificate.

Lismore's inaugural Aboriginal Citizen of the Year was awarded to Si Munniecon, an inspirational leader of young men and a passionate youth worker in our community. Deirdre Paillas, a volunteer choir leader, advocate for young people and teacher of English to speakers of other languages, is Lismore's Citizen of the Year.

Lucy Barker, an amazing young leader and tireless community volunteer from Kadina High School is the Young Citizen of the Year.

Other awards went to Alf Smith (Community Services), Lismore Base Hospital Auxiliary (Community Services Group), Jaiden Walker (Junior Sportsperson), Jim Armstrong (Senior Sportsperson) and Northern United RL Club (Sports Team). We congratulate all nominees and winners and thank you for all you do to make our community a better place.

Several times each year I perform the ceremony that is the final step in the citizen ceremony. None is more special than that on January 26 when our newest Australians publicly declare their allegiance to

their new Country in front of their fellow Aussies. This year, people from Kenya, Sudan, UK, USA, Jordan, Israel, China, Philippines, Germany, Switzerland, Pakistan and Slovenia became Australians and added to the rich tapestry of our community.

After entertainment by Luke Vasella and morning tea, many stayed for a swim before Aussie Battlers, a great hip hop dance competition hosted by Creative Peoples Collective and Youth Connections with help from Lismore City Council and other sponsors.

This event attracts hundreds of young dancers from across the region and is an event of fantastic energy and fun. I encourage readers to come along next year and see the abilities of five year olds through to the skills of the adults who teach them. It is truly amazing.

Margaret Olley Arts Centre and Nimbin skatepark

The application for \$4.5 million from the Federal Government towards the Olley was lodged on Friday January 15. We now await news of our success. We are also waiting to hear if our proposal to spend \$450,000 on a new concrete skatepark in Nimbin is approved. Fingers and toes remain crossed!

Council Meeting

The first Council meeting for the New Year will be Tuesday February 9, 6 pm. The Business Paper with agenda items and reports will be available on Wednesday February 3 on www.lismore.nsw.gov.au

WANTED:

WEBSITE DESIGNER

Nimbin Community Centre seeks expressions of interest from a web/PHP developer to further develop our current website:

www.nimbincommunity.org.au

Contact ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au for an information pack.

Applications close 26th February 2010.



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Janelle turns the first sod

by Janelle Saffin, MP

The latest figures show Australia has continued to lead the world in economic growth with our economy growing 0.2 per cent in the September quarter.

The private sector isn't yet investing like it had been before the onset of the deep global recession, so the Rudd Government's stimulus is playing a vital role in our recovery by filling that gap.

Here in Page the infrastructure spending has seen tens of millions invested in local government for roads and community facilities, and the biggest school modernisation project in our history with the Building the Education Revolution.

On my school visits last year I turned the first sod or inspected plans for many exciting projects, including new halls, libraries and multi-purpose classrooms.

I look forward to seeing the new buildings and I know some will be ready for the start of the new school year.

The President of the Australian Primary Principals' Association, Leonie Trimper has described this as the best initiative ever at the primary level.

Without the economic stimulus our economy would have gone backwards by 2 percent over the last year, and unemployment would be through the roof.

But instead, families in our region can look forward to 2010 knowing that while there will still be difficulties on the economic front, we are better placed than just about any other nation.



Janelle Saffin turns the first sod on the \$19.7 million Grafton Base Hospital redevelopment, delivering on a major election commitment. Joining her are, from left, Grafton Base Hospital's Medical Staff Council Chair Dr Allan Tyson, Clarence Valley Mayor Cr Richie Williamson, Emeritus Mayor of the former Grafton City Council Mrs Shirley Adams OAM, and local Aboriginal Elder Mr Roger Duroux.

Kickstart for Apprentices

Local businesses thinking of taking on a traditional trades apprentice have until the end of February to take advantage of the Rudd Government's Kickstart program.

There has never been a better time to take on an apprentice with the bonus for a new apprentice increasing from \$1500 to \$4850 in their first year.

The Kickstart bonus is available to employers of apprentices in the fields that have been hardest hit by skills shortages including bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, butchery, bakery, electrical trades and hairdressing.

We want to support up to 21,000 young Australians entering traditional trades this summer, and I hope many of these young people get that start in my electorate. Thank you to the local employers who have already

taken on new apprentices.

More information is available at www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au

Back to School

Claim your Education Tax Refund by saving your receipts.

I know many families with school age children find back to school costs put pressure on the family budget.

That's why the Rudd Government introduced the Education Tax Refund to make it easier for parents to meet the cost of their kids' educational needs.

The refund is for up to \$375 per primary school student and up to \$750 per secondary student.

I was surprised to see a report recently that only about half the eligible families have taken this opportunity to claim the education refund.

Parents and carers can claim half the cost of items such as textbooks, stationery, computers, printers and even home internet connections up to a certain amount.

Information on the refund is available at www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au

Member for Page
63 Molesworth Street
Lismore
Phone 1300-301-735



Justine with students from Centaur Public School

Caring for our Country

by Justine Elliot, MP

Community organisations across the country play a crucial role in restoring and protecting our natural environment.

The Rudd Government recognised the importance these community organisations play in caring for our environment through the 2009-2010 Caring for our Country Community Action Grants.

In the electorate of Richmond seven local organisations received Community Action Grants totalling \$97,000 including \$10,230 for the Jiggi Catchment Landcare Group.

The funding will enable the groups to undertake important local environmental activities, such as planting and revegetation, weed control, field days and community workshops and education.

This funding is fantastic news for the Northern Rivers and will help to protect our region for future generations.

Applications for the 2010-11 Community Action Grants are expected to open mid year.

Further information about Caring for our Country and the Community Action Grants program, including

a complete list of funded projects, is available at www.nrm.gov.au or by calling 1800 552 008.

Building Our Local Communities

Community halls and centres are vital to the vibrancy and cohesiveness of our local communities. They provide a space for communities to come together to meet, to share and to take part in vital volunteering activities.

Under the Community Infrastructure Program, an element of the National Building Economic Stimulus Plan, many of our local community halls and facilities will receive important upgrades totalling \$70,000.

The Rudd Government has committed infrastructure funding to upgrade the following local facilities:

- The Channon Public Hall;
- Goolmangar Hall;
- Blue Knob Hall;
- Tullera Community Hall;
- Coffee Camp Public Hall;
- Tuntable Creek Hall;
- Jiggi School of Arts;
- Dunoon Hall;
- Koonorigan Hall;
- Rosebank Public Hall;
- Numulgi Memorial Hall;
- Rock Valley Hall;
- Corndale Hall; and
- Nimbin School of Arts.

In addition to the upgrade of community halls, schools, roads, parks and recreational facilities, education and training has also been recognised.

Through the National Building Economic Stimulus Plan the Rudd Government has also committed \$1.38 million to the Dunoon Campus of the Australian Diver Accreditation Scheme Board.

The funding is for an exciting project to design and build two hybrid mechatronic simulators. These simulators will allow supervisors to access safe and realistic training in all elements of onshore and offshore commercial diving operations.

The simulators will be placed throughout western and eastern Australia to provide training and competency assessments for diving personnel.

Need Help?

If you ever need help with any Federal Government matters please call my office on 1300-720-675.

Member for Richmond
107 Minjungbal Drive
Tweed Heads South
Phone 1300-720-675

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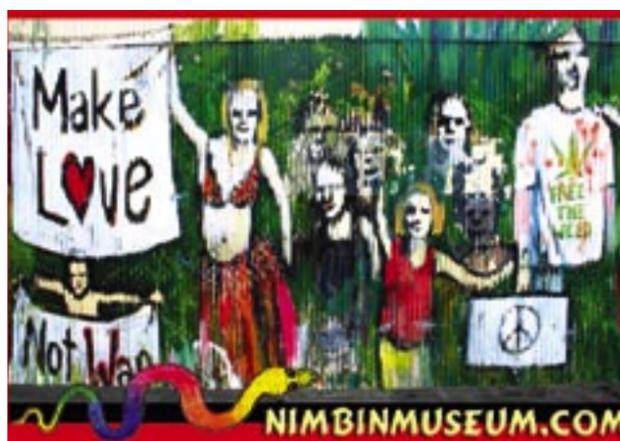
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NIMBIN STREET SHUFFLE

Karma and the Trade in Sleeping Medicine

by Undacuva

Why is the Dalai Lama always smiling and happy? What he told me changed my life forever. He convinced me Karma was for real. Cause and effect playing out to the enth degree, every hair on your head counted, the same hippy stuff I've been hearing for years as Nimbin's longest serving Undacuva, as the Chief called me when he awarded the honors at the State Unda Ball. Embarrassing because everyone knows getting a bust in the 'Bin is "shooting fish in a gunbarrel", as he said, as drunk as.

Back on the beat suddenly it's all different. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. My Karma was shocking, the Lama said. He could read my aura and saw my conflict with the job. "You smoke with them then you betray them?" he looked at me incredulously. "Many are in jail because of you. This is shocking karma my sister, how do you sleep at night?" I admitted I needed the best weed to get to sleep because my conscience was screaming at me. "And so you keep doing the betrayals to get the 'sleeping medicine'?" This was his name for pot all the time as it turned out.

"And I see many people in your community do this. I see many informers keeping themselves out of jail by dobbing on others. Oh dear, oh dear," he got quite agitated. "There will be huge suffering for these people, terrible Karma. To be happy you must feel good about what you do. It doesn't matter what others think, you cannot fool yourself, or your conscience. God's finger," he waved one at me. "The finger will tickle you at night, indeed all day. You cannot hide from it."

It was as if he could see inside me and as his eyes glazed over he started muttering about the greed of the drug companies and the shocking Karma they had coming as well. Then he was back with us smiling and laughing again and it was all over. But not for me. He'd touched me, so I couldn't ignore it and I haven't been able to shut it up in my head since that night. No matter how much Nepali yakfat hash I smoke!

It's virtually impossible to leave the Force, you know. We swear terrible loyalties and exchange blood, and stuff. Secret stuff I wouldn't dare mention or I'd be dead tomorrow. Anyhow, I front the Boss confident as, but fail miserably.

He laughs at me. "I go to church Mary," he flatly replies. I'm still with piggytails but an English art student now. "And do my weekly confessions. Maybe you should too?" I realized it was useless, as I had a million times before. I was alone, simple. My training took over and Mary responded in her squeaky posh voice. "I will sir. Next week, I promise I'll go to confession."

Back at work, the Lama's words have clouded my vision. Of course I know most of the informers and some of them I know well, we smoke together

and skunk. Every few months we order a burning of "excess stash" and the leaf is incinerated. Slowly the stash grows again as we make a few new arrests. You get the picture I imagine. In this job the best weed is always available for Undas, of course, unlike the rabble on Cullen Street over the holiday period.

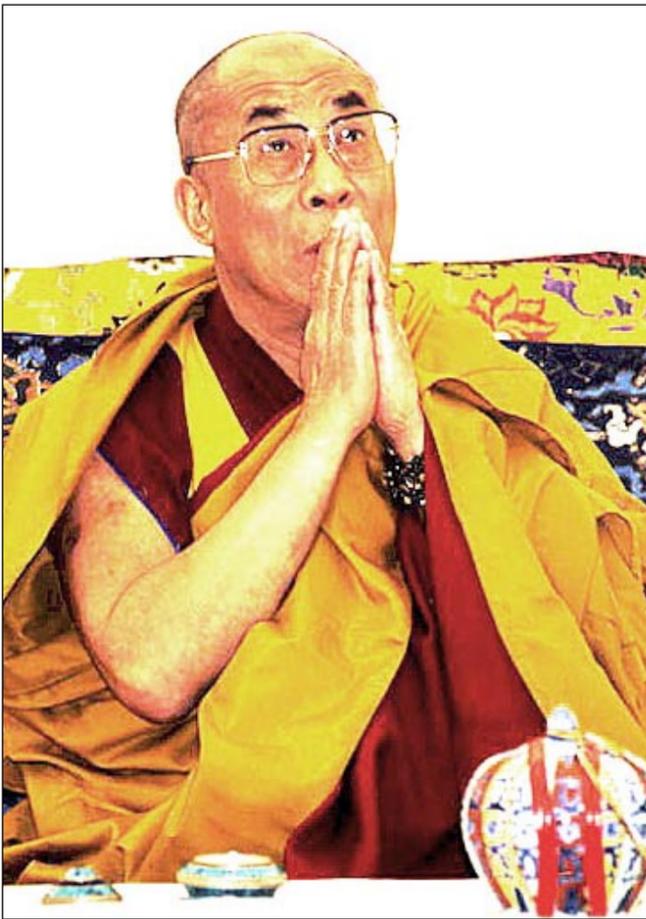
The new figures coming out of California have got the Aussie Coppers Union (ACU) in a panic. Crime is plummeting in the now fifteen States with Medical Cannabis outlets. We all know everything runs on statistics and we all know Nimbin is the place to break records, but apparently the local hippies, no prizes for guessing who, have applied to be an authorised outlet for medical weed in the village, and the Canberra Health bureaucrats are all of a tizz and swayed by their arguments because it worked like a miracle on someone's auntie. Of course the ACU is in there trying to maintain zero tolerance but I hear they are having trouble keeping up the argument.

Within hours the underground wireservice and the tunnel network had spread the word I wanted to resign and PI (Private Investigator) Love was on the phone headhunting me I had no idea I'd be sought after but "It's the contacts" she said, "the inside knowledge, it's priceless," she said.

This led to an extraordinary bit of OW (Outside Work-very popular in the Force these days) I got this month, visiting the new Grafton experiment where they are growing medicinal weed.

Apparently the new government forms were fooled entirely by the boys inside who found their environment fitted the official criteria list perfectly. Twelve foot fence surrounding the garden with 24 hour security, expertise in all areas of cannabis growing. If only they had inspected the site of the not-so-little green house in Grafton at some nondescript address which is growing more than 16 pounds a week now. Can you believe it!

I was sent in as an Unda for a few days and it seems everyone is happy as. The jail is chilled like never before, if not giggling. In fact everyone is grinning and the medical research figures coming out of the "trial" are confounding all the experts. In my efforts to eradicate some bad Karma I reported back, in suitably vague terms which everyone is well used to, that nothing untoward was happening. The Boss seemed happy, but gave me a long sideways look. I slept like a baby for the first time in months.



regularly. They've been collecting in Nimbin for years and happily inform on each other as well as everyone else because they don't know who else has swopped sides. I find myself trying to convert them. "What? Go to Jail instead?" There is no option I see. Once a dog always a dog. They were as trapped as I was. I started crying during one conversation and had to make up some nonsense about my Grandpa tipping the boiling kettle over himself in London and will I ever see him again. Ah, the training, it's extraordinary.

Almost half the people left on the Nimbin streets are informers or Undacuvans now. Even the youth workers are getting MOO's (move on orders). Of course the dealing never stops, and anyway the Undas have fifty pounds to put in or out of the market whenever we like. We just have to sign bags out with the eighty year old bookkeeper who can't tell the difference between leaf

The Cannabis Corrective Centre of Australia

(Formerly the Australian Hemp Party Prison)



"The law is the crime, but it's fun to do time."

Nimbin Jail has started the new year with a bhang, and is filling up fast as the harvest season draws closer.

The expertise and resources of our Cannabis Corrective Centre are in full swing making cakes, cookies, confection, tincture, hashish and many other high grade Medicinal Cannabis products for the expanding export market.

"There is no better way to fund a prison," says NJ Media Liaison Officer, Polly-Anna Polite. "The profits have exceeded expectations so far this financial year, and now we have a major new contract with a Californian Medical Marijuana supplier - Need-4-Weed.

"Other State Prisons are keen to adopt our business plan."

We can expect a shortage of vacancies due to the recent arrests in Nimbin, where most of the talented growers and prison staff originate.

Rehabilitation is the NJ success story, we have processed even the most difficult prisoner with our easy 3-step program.

The criminal element can now be of use to society within this 'win-win' situation. NJ Inmates are happy to do the time as a service to the community. We are proud to boast our clean record with no violence or discipline issues.

There are 44 Faeries making Ganja Butter every night. Indoor and Outdoor varieties of organic plants. 100% pure extracts. Extra staff at our centre will provide a higher security level and keep out crime," said Officer Polite.

Visiting hours, between 2pm - 4pm have ceased in order to protect the crop from mould, bacteria and insects. You can now talk to the inmates via the internet service and on facebook live exclusively.

NJ OPEN DAY

From 9.00am, Thursday, 1st April, 2010.

Bookings are essential for the annual NJ Open Day. All inquiries and details can be found on the website www.NimbinJail.com

WANTED

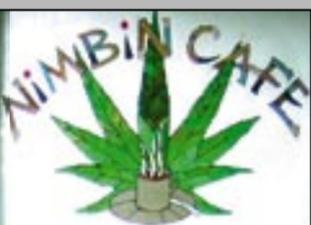
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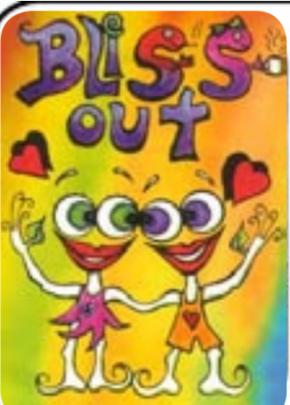


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The Conroy Delusion, or: How to read the Internet

by Warwick Fry

The Internet has become (among other things) a playground for grotesquely matched playmates. But hasn't media always been like that? Like literature it grows beyond the imaginations of its creators.

Attempts to ban "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and "Lolita" (both novels are now legal) in the 1960s provoked rich imaginative rebounds upon those who attempted to contain or control publication and dissemination of those works. Conroy has Buckley's. There are plenty of hacks for paedophile networks to work around the 'filters' The 'filters' incidentally will enable a level of surveillance that goes far beyond 'detecting' paedophiles and sex maniacs and will slow down service provider speeds significantly, despite Conroy's hired studies asserting the contrary. Conroy's insistence on an outmoded fundamentalist concept of 'moral rectitude' to enforce the legislation, a legislation which will enable a level of surveillance above and beyond 'filtering' pornography is disturbing to any serious thinker. It is typical to invoke his 'school' (like the 'Mad Monk' Abbott), of moral rectitude to enforce a misplaced desire (if not lust) for surveillance.

Despite Senator Kate Lundy's

backbench challenge (Kate created her own web page in the 90s a decade before most of her colleagues realised that the Internet existed), Conroy insists on pursuing a path that is a saurian throwback to the attitudes of the late 50s and early 60s, in terms of cultural and legal attitudes. The "P" word launches fear and loathing in a certain section of the population, an unchanged, political allegiance lacking leadership, and new levels of surveillance to favour a 'Realpolitik' bereft of direction towards a new age.

Which leads one to wonder, whose is the hidden agenda? An agenda not so different from the agendas, the fears and the phobias of Mid 20th Century when they 'banned' "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and "Lolita" and "Reds under the Beds" seemed to be on very politician's trigger finger. The Internet has changed the modalities of our communications but Conroy is living proof that the memes and phobias that the 'Flower Children' of the 60s tried to subvert seem to be prevailing.

"Who Idiot-Proofs the Idiots?"

There are several sides to 'both sides'. A lot of rubbish is out there on the Internet, much of which I personally don't think should be there. And there are a lot of people who take rubbish more seriously than

it should be. But I, unlike Conroy don't believe one should try to ban or 'filter' it. The Internet, like the human mind is self-correcting.

For example, in the early days of the Internet, several years BW (before Windows) and coloured screens, when everything was in text, the main 'space' for social networking were the Usenet newsgroups – a huge collection of news lists (that could be selected and imported directly into your e-mail) where anyone could start up any discussion topic they wanted to – a bit like today's 'blogs'. They were originally organised into seven categories – like comp for computer soc for society sci. for science rec. for recreation talk. for talk, etc. (Later as the lists grew, other categories like sex and alt for alternative, and national categories – aus for Australia – developed).

Two popular groups (probably developed by X-File fans) were alt. warehouse and alt.conspiracy. alt. warehouse was the cyber-gathering of people who believed that the US military had a secret 'warehouse' in the middle of the desert where they secretly kept pieces of flying saucers that had been shot down, the frozen body of an alien, and secret weapons that were too powerful to be used (yet). The existence or not of these artefacts were often the subject of heated debate (called 'flames'), until the sceptics started to compete and try to outdo each other in by including all kinds of absurd objects and creatures – until the warehouse included Elvis Presley, all the missing

halves of odd socks etc. until alt. warehouse spun out of control to spawn other newsgroups like alt.soc. urbanmyths.

Such groups have their counterparts in the blogosphere and demonstrate the dangers of cherry picking information about your favourite obsession by googling it and calling it authoritative 'research'. Most of the Internet's spurious information comes from right wing bloggers who seem to specialise in spreading memes and urban myths that support their own ideological attitudes. Fortunately most of them eventually come apart at the seams, falling under the weight of their own inconsistencies, although some of the better produced and financed ones function in the way described by Noam Chomsky in *Manufacturing Consent*, where he details the tactic of the US State Department of quoting a 'reliable news' source that has its origins in one of their own press releases or statements.

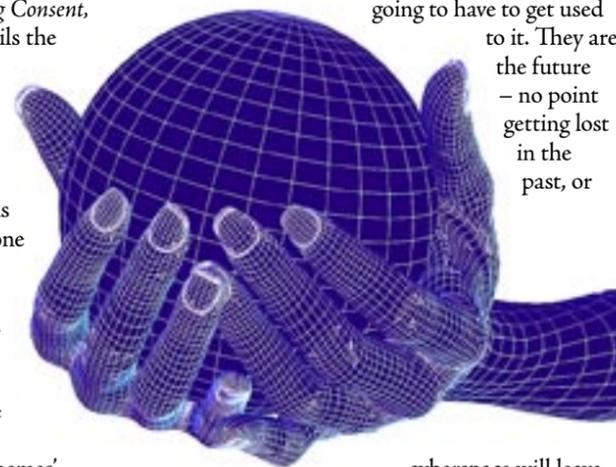
Hence mainstream journalists are being trained now to spot 'memes' after several large publications have been caught out in a number of embarrassing incidents where a journalist did not check out facts that

might get in the way of a good story. For example, even the prestigious US magazine *Foreign Policy* fell for the story that the Haiti earthquake was caused by a special US weapons program (HAARP) that involved manipulation of weather and other natural phenomena.

Grotesquely matched playmates – right wing nutters, deadly serious academics, Script-kiddy hackers, conspiracy theorists, activists, porn aficionados (see the Muppet style parody: "The Internet is for Porn" at /www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWEjvCRPrCo), gamers and role-players – all thrown together in the same big sandpit.

Some 'Oldies' still need to learn how to 'read' the Internet. The kids are growing up with it. You're going to have to get used to it. They are the future – no point getting lost in the past, or cyberspace will leave you behind.

Let's face it. Conroy's legislation is not just about sexuality. It's about a fear of 'loss of control'.



MardiGrass needs people now

from the MardiGrass Organising Committee

MardiGrass has always relied on volunteers, as does the HEMP Embassy throughout the year. We are trying to keep the event grassroots and inexpensive enough for everyone to be able to come join in.

If money is tight for you, volunteering for at least four hours and twenty minutes [4.20] gets you a full weekend pass, normally worth \$40. If you do volunteer to be part

of MOB throughout the weekend you get the royal treatment, meals, a quiet chill area behind the HEMP Embassy and campsite if you need it, etc etc.

There is a book in the HEMP Embassy shop where you can write your name and contact details, what skills you have or work you prefer, and the days and times either before, during or even after the big weekend.

We so need our locals. Your knowledge is critical to the non-locals and backpackers who volunteer and want to

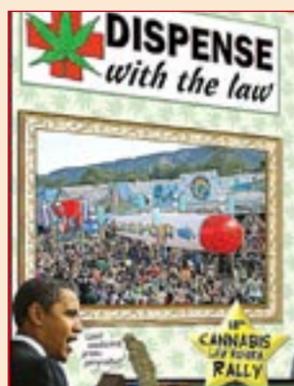
experience our event and village!

Jungle Patrol needs you the most; they do a brilliant job as our community safety team so if you can 'hack the pace' and help Heidi, Paul and crew, this is an important spoke in the wheel. Anyone with security experience or traffic tickets is especially sought after!

Truly, it is our experience that volunteers have a great time. We work like hippies (extremely varied but creative, flexible and tolerant!) and make it a priority that enjoyment is primary.

The MardiGrass Development Application (DA) has already been lodged with Lismore Council, which probably surprised them even more than us!

Many thanks to Anna for her extraordinary tenacity and diligence that could only have been honed by the years she spent working for the organisation we are striving to satisfy. Thanks also to Michael Smith and Paul le Bars for their help with the



maps needed.

We are planning on Peace Park being the real hub of the 18th MardiGrass this year and need acrobats, jugglers, puppeteers, stilt-walkers and other entertainers to get in touch with us early. The same applies for musicians who want a spot on the programme we suggest you contact us soon.

Within the DA approval we have asked for designated areas around the village for acoustic and amplified buskers and the plan is for MG armbands to come with a busker's token this year, called a toke of course! The most popular will be invited to play on stage Sunday evening in Peace Park.

Council does not issue hawkers licenses, and MOB has had to take measures to ensure compliance with the five-year DA. All activities within and in close proximity to the village (including the Showground) need to be within the application or it will just not happen. Council plans on having a Compliance Officer to control rude boundary breakers.

Anyone wishing to sell anything outside of the permissible traders and businesses are again encouraged to register themselves with Market Cat, leave details in the Embassy or call Cat on 0429-194-248.

The centre of the village will be free of parked cars this year for the first time with no parking outside the Town Hall from Perceptios to the Pub and between the Museum and the Emporium on the other side.

Elspeth has graciously accepted co-ordinating a *Creative MardiGrass Sign Workshop* early this year on 21st February. Anyone who has a suggestion for areas requiring signage around the village; anyone who has the

"Nimbin" creativity; anyone who has a political point to get across in the MG Law Reform Rally on the Sunday; anyone who has artistic supplies or is in fact an artist, please come and look for us at the Nimbin Markets that Sunday.

Advertisers and sponsors we love and you are encouraged to get your (ideally MardiGrass related) artwork onto the website and into the programme sooner rather than later. We can create it for you and we give away those programmes year-round in Nimbin.

Becoming the biggest event in the Lismore shire has ironically now meant we have to get better organised to comply with the modern day control freaks! Amazingly the Nimbin community's depth of talent and experience has surfaced yet again, and so far we have kept pace with the regulations upon regulations.

MardiGrass Organising Body (MOB) meetings have commenced in The HEMP Bar from 4.20 each Friday from now until Friday April 23rd – 11 weeks and counting down.

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Coming soon to Blue Knob Hall Gallery

Celebration of Colour is the theme for our next exhibition.

Curator Robin Moore writes, "Colours are like people; colours have personalities; colours interact with other colours, creating vibrations, setting up resonances; colours sing, shout, whisper; colours are sometimes sad, sometimes joyous; colours are symbols that talk without words and are part of our language.

Let us celebrate the colours of clouds and of sky, let us

rejoice in the colours of trees and of mountains, of ocean waves and little hills and, above all, may we celebrate the range of colours of skin that enrich this planet."

The exhibition runs from Thursday, 18th February to Sunday, 11th April. Opening times are Thursday to Sunday 11am to 4pm. Entry is free.

The colourful Grand Opening is Friday 19th at 6.30pm, followed by dinner (\$15, if booked: 66897 449).

On the Easel this month will feature Kyogle's Black Horse Creek Community's 350 Climate Change Quilt. For many years, the community has enjoyed marking special occasions with collaborative quilts.

350 represents the safe upper limit of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere, measured in parts per million (ppm). 350 ppm is the point to which the planet must return (currently 389) to stabilise climate. The people's 350 movement called for leaders to make sweeping, positive changes to protect our world when they met at the UN climate conference at Copenhagen in December.

The 350 movement is endorsed by prominent



figures such as David Suzuki, Vandana Shiva, Desmond Tutu and Tim Flannery.

Felting Workshop

Sachiko Kotaka will be running two 2 day Ori-kiri felting workshops, on 20-21st March and 10-11th April in Blue Knob Hall Gallery's new 'Moore Workshop Space'.

The technique evolved from Sachiko's childhood play,



The 350 Climate Change Quilt and its makers.

which the Japanese call 'Ki-ri-ga-mi'. Fabrics or pre-felts are folded (O-ri) with an iron and then cut (Ki-ri). This is an attempt to adopt the paper technique of Origami as a felt-making method!

Lunch!

As always, the *Artists and Friends Lunch* will happen on the last Thursday of the month - 12.30pm Thursday

25th February.

Enjoy a main course and dessert in beautiful surroundings with interesting company and conversation. Cost is \$15 per person and a small donation for wine; bookings are required.

Blue Knob Hall and Gallery is open Thursday to Sunday, 10am-4pm, with a verandah cafe operating.

Phone 6689-7449.



Moore Workshop Space available

by Paul Tait

We have just had our first workshop in the new "Moore Workshop Space" at the Blue Knob Hall.

What better way to start than with Polly Stirling (*Wild Turkey Feltmakers*) giving a felt-making workshop?

Polly is one of the original creators of this form and is now world famous for

her work and teaching skills and the creation of her own individual designs.

Polly had ten people do their introduction to felt-making by producing a felt hand bag.

They began by selecting wool, designing and creating their piece and then doing the hard work of the felting process which entails rolling and pounding the wool, wrapped in sturdy bubble wrap for an extended time till the mysterious process occurs which

creates the magical finished product.

The whole process takes all of 6 hours for the participants to complete and the results were quite beautiful.

The new workshop space is available for a small price per hour of \$6.00 or \$36.00 for a 6-hour day. Please ring Blue Knob Hall on 6689-7449 Thursday to Sunday, 10am-4pm.

There must be many people with skills they would like to share with the community in this wonderful space.



Seen at the January Artists and Friends Lunch



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