



New Doctor

Why would the good Doctor think that growing up in a drug-addicted environment be good for his one-year old son? (NGT March 12, p.2) And what part of Nimbin is a cultural environment?

Obviously Dr Leahy has a fascination with death and dying, whether it be related to Aids (Palm Island has the highest proportion of Aids related deaths in the world) or death by addiction.

Good luck Doctor.

Darcy P. McKee
Alstonville

Plagiarism?

For someone who has taken a lot of time to digest, research and write a rather negative letter, it appears that Derick Grimditch's concept of 'plagiarism' has joined the ranks of the very subject matter he self-righteously dismissed (NGT March 12, Letters).

He accused Leannrah of such, yet her February column clearly acknowledges her sources – they always do, therefore she wasn't passing off the information as her own.

So is there something about 'plagiarism' that I don't understand?

Tony Baron
Kyogle

Writing about weeds

Dear Mr Hood, please do not include me in a triad with Hart and Dawe (NGT March 12, Letters). For the record I responded only to Mr Dawe's first letter, refraining from any further engagement.

However, I continue to write articles on weeds, or 'naturalised' species, for NGT. These are not necessarily 'for the converted' but for those

who have come, often from the cities, to make a life in this region. Many of these people have an interest in responsible land custodianship. I believe they would like to know more about the various plants on their properties and in the district, especially the ones that will become problematic if left alone.

The editors of NGT have encouraged me to share my knowledge with the community. The debate that ensued surprised me, and I am learning what an emotive issue 'weeds' is, and the diverse range of attitudes that exist.

Triny Roe

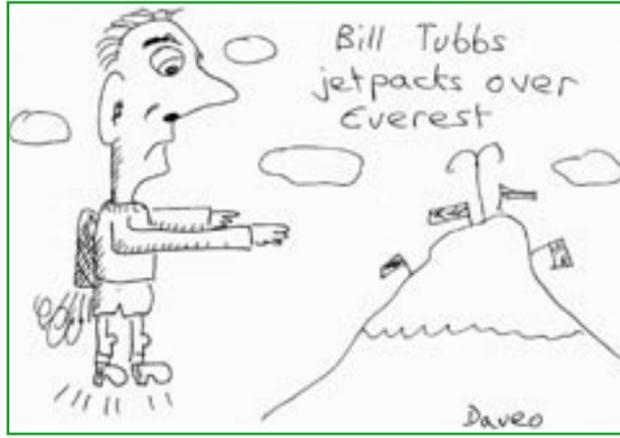
Misguided war on weeds

It has been suggested that what is being said by myself regarding weeds is already well-known and is preaching to the converted.

However, it is generally thought by society that biodiversity conservation is best carried out through bush regeneration. That is not true. Bush regeneration is a relatively minor part of habitat restoration, and when the former is done, chemical-free, it can be carried out without the possibility of threatening soil and water.

The poisoning of species occurs not because they are noxious, but because European consciousness wants to continue pursuing an out-of-balance lifestyle, and blame other species for the out-of-balance reflection that occurs in the environment as a result.

If what I was saying was well-known, there would be, in order of importance, major restoration of human diet, major movement of people rurally rather than



to urban areas, and major movement to chemical-free bush regeneration, or there would be repudiation by argument of what is being said in these letters. None of the above are occurring. Reasonably, it can be thought, it is because the point of view is not well known.

It makes no sense to not examine the cause of biodiversity loss, see that it was mostly due to farming and grazing, and not consider that adjustments have to be made at that level for a cure to be effected. We presently carry out a mostly toxic war on 'noxious' plants and animals who attempt to heal soil.

The war is conducted with little hope of success because professional labour costs prohibit the bush regeneration of Australia and many volunteers are sidelined because they have concern, with good reason, for the technological approach. We do all of this because we do not wish to make societal adjustments to cure causes.

The writer Henry Miller observed, "The world is not to be put in order, the world is order incarnate. It is up to us to put ourselves in unison with the order."

Geoff Dawe
Birrill Creek

Poisons

Re the NEC column (NGT March 12, p. 16) about poison spray, we have the same problem in Byron shire.

If it's not council and their contractors, it's Far North Coast Weeds. If it's not them, it's everyone else who believes the propaganda that herbicide is safe.

I live in Mullumbimby, and it's everywhere. The

high school uses it on their boundary fence, and the kids sit in it, up against the fence. I have put info packs into the school, the swimming pool and Bowls club all next to each other, but to no avail – they are still using herbicide.

Hard to break old habits and get away from the propaganda the chemical companies promote.

Paul Brecht
Mullumbimby

Religious hoaxes

Dear Mookx, I read your diatribe about religion (NGT March 12, p.24) with interest, and whilst I don't disagree with your opinion, it would be very equitable if you would write a similar piece about that other religion, astrology. See page 22 of the March issue of your paper for a fine example of the rubbish some believe in.

Ron Kerr
Ballina

Safe skateboarding

On a recent visit to Nimbin I was putting things in my car, my dog on its lead waiting on the footpath, when I heard a skateboard loudly coming towards me and the dog, very fast. I waved at the boy to slow, because I know my dog is scared of skateboards, but the boy, about 15, kept coming very fast, even when my hand was up waving while he was still about 3-4 metres away.

I moved towards the boy to stop, but travelling at speed, he ignored me. He went around me, my dog about a metre away, me between the dog and the boy. I did not have hold of my dog's lead. My dog went towards him and for the first time ever, I saw my dog mouth the boy on the leg.

Letters to the editor

NGT welcomes letters by email or post by deadline, the last Wednesday of the month. Letters longer than 300 words may be cut. Letters already published in other papers will usually not be considered. Please include full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of NGT.

The boy stopped and laughed. My dog did not attack the boy, or break the boy's skin, thank God, but for the first time in its life I saw her reaction to fear

and ignorance. The boy took one of his earplugs out and smirked. I said to him, "My dog has never done that before. She has never tried to bite anyone." The boy ignored me and rode off saying nothing, putting his earplug back in.

Then exactly the same thing happened outside the newsagency, minus my dog's reaction. Only about 10 metres away, the boy skating at exactly the same fast speed. This time I said, "Why don't you get off and walk, or ride on the road?" He took his earplug out and said, "Why don't you control your dog?" and I said she was under control, and indicated the lead.

He said, "If your dog attacks me again, I will smash its face in." I said, "You can't do that, because if you do it would be a sin" (flabbergasted and not knowing what to say). The boy got angry and said, "If your dog comes near me or touches me, I will tell my mother, and she's a solicitor."

My dog is the gentlest creature, but like all dogs, she is closer to the ground than an adult, just like a toddler. She is aware of things in a big way at her level – like ridden or runaway skateboards.

I was threatened with legal action by a teenage boy, because he was riding at speed on the footpath, the second time carrying groceries, and had no thought to slow. No consideration for others.

Please kids, you were small once. Remember small eyes are watching you, and they are not always human. Visitors bring their pets to town, they are not local but they have rights too.

While writing this in Banksia House, I just saw

the same kid doing the same thing – spare me, spare my dog.

Andrea and Numina
Green Pigeon
Edited for length – Ed.

Bum steer

As avid readers of NGT are probably aware, I am now a "Local Tourist Attraction". Well, if not me, part of me.

Anyone wishing to decide which should consult the back-side (I choose the term with good reason) of the last NGT.

I would be extremely grateful if anyone with good (optical) quality pictures of said Local Tourist Attraction could email me a good (electronic) quality version.

I would like to have them for the family scrap-book and in particular for the grand- and great-grand-kiddies to see what their ancestor was up to in his 79th year – might even inspire them to help save the planet.

Said pictures could also prove useful in our Nimbin Coal-Seam-Gas-Free-Roads campaign.

Len Martin
Nimbin

Thanks

I would like to sincerely thank NGT for doing a story on my 'Seascape Weavings' Exhibition in Ballina (NGT February 12, p.15). It was an overwhelming success, partly due to your support.

People came from all over the region, after reading the article, especially to see the show. The event was better than I ever dreamed of.

It is wonderful you support 'us little guys'. Keep up the good work.

I must also say that I love your paper, It is so different, interesting and informative, and sometimes really funny, and sometimes crazy...

Thanks so much for delivering it down my way.

Deb McFarlane
Ballina

About us

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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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Many of our white ancestors arrived in Australia as a result of petty theft in England. They stole such things as loaves of bread or maybe a packet of biscuits.

The punishment was seven years labour in the Penal Colony of NSW. Once in the colony they were subjected to brutal treatment in most cases, but eventually gained their Ticket of Leave, many of them choosing to remain in the fledgling State.

How things have changed... These days pinching some biscuits or even being suspected of doing so could see you flat out stone-cold dead on a footpath – the victim of a 'non-lethal weapon'.

The police seem to have gotten the bit between their teeth lately regarding the use of lethal force to solve minor disputes. At the risk of sounding like an old fart, I have to say that things were

different when I was younger. At six feet four inches tall (1.9m), the only other heads I would see on a crowded footpath in Brisbane, would be coppers. I looked at them, they looked at me.

Maybe it's the long-term effects of junk food or the excessive consumption of beer, but the cops are getting shorter all the time it seems. The only exceptions are those police persons who expand laterally. It took a while and a bit of contemplation but I finally worked out that hey, they don't need to be big and strong anymore, they carry their strength on their belt around their waist. Here they have a choice of a baton, capscicum spray, a taser or a pistol... they don't need muscles.

What we all need is somebody to protect us from the people who are paid to protect us. Can you tell the difference between a dangerous and violent man and a policeman?

Harry Neville
Stony Chute

What is a Feminazi?

Feminazis are groups of women in our society that have been around for as long as the feminist movement. They are usual 'man-hating' females, but experience has proven that they are actually just as likely to attack women, particularly vulnerable women in our community, the elderly and single mothers.

They seek control over other people, hiding behind the feminist movement when in fact they are a fundamentalist group of women who pride themselves on their attack on others.

Their traits include:
Public attacks: there must be a thrill gained from publicly humiliating other women, feminazis do this at every opportunity.

Man-hating: regardless of what men may be like, (and there are some very decent men in the world and some have been raised by single mothers), men do not deserve to be marginalized simply because of their gender.

Compassionless: as part of their bitterness, feminazis have no compassion for other women's situations or circumstance.

Protests for protest sake: feminazis will often be found jumping on causes purely because there is a fight to be had.

Feminazis take over and are usually on every committee, board or organisation/protest in the community to fulfill their need to gain power and most importantly to put others down. They will sit on committees for life.

Feminazis spring from a dated hippy genre of older women who have probably been left by their male partners and in their bitterness they chose to attack, patronise and humiliate their female counterparts.

They usually work in packs because there is obvious safety in numbers, and they gain kudos from their feminazi comrades.

As a society we should eradicate this fundamentalist group but in the meantime we can be made aware that both men AND women will be targeted by feminazis.

Lis Miller
Nimbin

RIP Vince Lovegrove 1948 – 2012

The music world mourns the loss of Vince Lovegrove, who died near Federal on Friday night, 23rd March when his Kombi van came off the road, rolled and caught alight.

Vince has been a major motivating force within the music industry since his youth. He formed the band *The Valentines* and shared vocals with Bon Scott in the 1960's. Later Vince introduced Bon to the members of AC/DC, rock history was forged.

He stayed a close friend of Bon until his death in 1980, and later campaigned to have a memorial statue of Bon Scott created and displayed in Perth.

Vince discovered *The Divinyls*, and in 1981 he became their manager, and promoted them on their road to success both in Australia and overseas. He worked as

a tour manager for Jimmy Barnes and toured Europe with him.

A keen writer, Vince has written columns for newspapers both in the UK and in Australia and had been a reporter for *Go-Set* and *The Don Lane Show*. He wrote the unauthorised biography of his friend Michael Hutchence. He continued compiling music and publishing the weekly *MusicBackTrack*, the last of which was published Friday 23rd March. Vince was due to begin work as a writer at *The Northern Star* newspaper in Lismore on 28th March.

Vince was a family man who loved his children. He was already a father to Holly when Vince married Suzi Sidewinder, and together they had a son Troy.

Suzi and Troy contracted AIDS from a blood transfusion when Troy was

a baby. Suzi died in 1987. Vince quit *The Divinyls*, and made a TV documentary "Suzi's Story", which won him a Human Rights Award in 1987. The film told the story of his wife's battle with HIV AIDS, with the aim of raising awareness that AIDS was not just a "gay disease". Suzi Lovegrove died 14th June 1987.

Troy, also ill with the disease, became the subject of another documentary "A Kid Called Troy". He died in 1993, just three weeks before his eight birthday.

In 2008 Vince released the first of two CDs under the name *Mongrels Of Passion*, recorded with Tim Gaze.

Vince had an ear for talent, a glimmer in his eye, he was a writer, and a great friend to many.

He will be sadly missed.
Pampussycat Bourne

Notices

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The Nimbin Community Centre currently has two rooms available for rent. For further information, please visit our website at: www.nimbincommunity.org.au Expressions of interest can be sent to ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au

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Free massage deal

Kahuna Bodywork and Massage with Chrissy now available every second Wednesday at Nimbin Apothecary. First visit an extra 1/2 hour massage for free in April and May. Soft and Deep Tissue, Emotion Release Therapy. Bookings essential: 6689-1529.

Knitting and crochet sessions

Thursdays at 3pm in the Community School Green Room at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Unity Bhajans

Meetings 8th and 22nd April and 13th May, 11am at Birth and Beyond, Nimbin. Enquiries contact Maria 6633-7261.

Community donations

Not-for-profit organisations providing a community service in the Lismore LGA can apply to Lismore City Council for Section 356 Miscellaneous Community Donations. Funds are to be for specific projects rather than ongoing operating costs. The maximum any one group can apply for is \$2,200. Application form on Council's website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au Closes 4.30pm, Monday, April 30. For information contact Council on 1300-878-387.



ANZAC Day March 2012

The 2012 ANZAC observance in Allsopp Park will be held Wednesday 25th April.

Assembly at the Nimbin Hospital is at 10.50am to start the march at 10.55am to commence the observance ceremony at the Nimbin District War Memorial at 11.00am.

All the Nimbin and surrounding communities are welcome to participate on the day, in the march, or as a spectator.

The Nimbin Hotel will be providing entertainment from 12pm, with ANZAC songs by Tubs and two-up games in the afternoon. Unfortunately due to last year's lack of attendance, the regular inter-denominational Service will NOT be held at the Nimbin Bowling Club.

Any assistance from ex-service personnel or the general community to organise the march, observance and services on the day would be greatly appreciated. Phone Paul LeBars on 6689-0396.

"Lest We Forget"

The Nimbin District War Memorial was commissioned in 1924 and dedicated in 1925 by the then NSW Governor General Sir Dudley De Chair, the construction is a dedication to those who fought and died, the wounded and to those who never returned from the First World War.

Rest in Peace

Veronica Vivienne "Viv" BALDOCK

Formerly of King Island and late of Nimbin. Passed away peacefully and left our realm of consciousness on Tuesday 20th March, 2012, aged 92 years.

Beloved wife of Kev (dec); loved mother of Fran, Lois, Kerry, Lynne, Darrell (dec) and Megan. Mother-in-law of Tammy, Paul and Jem. Loved Grandma of her eleven Grandchildren and best friend of Marjie.

Laid to rest at Nimbin Cemetery on Wednesday 28th March.

Alexander George "George" LARSEN

Passed away at Nimbin Hospital on 25th March, 2012, aged 77 years. Much loved Husband of Beth (dec'd). Dearly loved Dad of Peter and Lyn, adored Pop to Hayley, Laura, Alex and DJ.

Laid to rest on Thursday 29th March at Nimbin Cemetery.

Rex James WALKER

Late of Nimbin, passed away peacefully on Sunday 25th March 2012, aged 80 years. Loved father of Peter; loving son of the late Douglas and Esther Walker; loved brother of Elsie (dec), Alton (dec), Ailsa, Geoff and their families.

Laid to rest at Nimbin Cemetery on Friday 30th March.



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Janelle's Page



TWU and Labor MPs and Senators celebrating passing of the legislation for Safe Rates

by Janelle Saffin, MP

Safe rates for truck drivers

In March, the Federal Government's Road Safety Remuneration Bill was passed – legislation that will save lives by ensuring that truck drivers are paid reasonably for the work they do and remove the economic incentive for truck drivers to take unacceptable risks on

our roads.

I have been a strong supporter of the Transport Workers Union campaign for safe rates in the trucking industry and also strongly supportive of the efforts the government has made to deliver this. I particularly commend the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Anthony Albanese, for his hard work in getting this legislation through.

We know that around 250 people are killed and that more than 1,000 suffer serious injuries on our roads each year in accidents involving trucks.

For more than 20 years there have been reviews, coronial inquiries and reports showing a direct link between pay rates and safety for truck drivers.

The TWU and industry representatives were on the government's Safe



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

Rates Advisory Committee and were consulted every step of the way about this legislation.

Truck drivers, whether employees or owner-drivers, should not have to speed, overload their trucks or drive excessive hours to earn a decent living. Truck drivers work hard enough to make a living and the government wants to support measures which ensure pay rates that encourage drivers to drive safely, manage their hours and maintain their vehicle. That is reasonable.

Northern Rivers Bioregion

The Northern Rivers is to be one of the first regions to undergo a detailed scientific assessment of the impact of coal seam gas mining, including impacts on our water.

The Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, has announced the first regions to be assessed by the Interim Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Coal Mining, to provide better information for decision makers to ensure protection of water resources. The Northern Rivers is in the Clarence-Moreton Basin, one of the five priority areas announced.

The news that our area is a priority for scientific assessment is particularly welcome given the mounting community alarm and community action against CSG and the impact such activity may have on water resources.

While mining and water resources come under State powers, I have been pushing the Federal Government

to use what limited powers it has to protect the environment and our water.

In November last year the Government announced a new scientific framework and a National Partnerships Agreement on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal mining to ensure all future decisions about coal seam gas projects are based on the most rigorous scientific evidence available.

I wrote to Minister Burke asking that the Northern Rivers be put forward to the Interim Independent Expert Scientific Committee for consideration as a priority area for environmental assessment. I am pleased that the needs of our area have now been recognised.

Under the National Partnership Agreement, which New South Wales signed this month, signatory governments are required to seek the committee's advice when considering applications that potentially have direct or indirect impacts on water resources.

Locals to benefit from new skills plan

by Justine Elliot MP

ABS data shows an estimated 1.3 million people across New South Wales are missing out on the opportunities that come from higher skills, including an extra \$10,000 a year in wages.

Local MP Justine Elliot (pictured) said the Federal Labor Government's new skills plan would give these local people without a post school qualification every opportunity to undertake further education and training to get a better paid job.

Skills Australia estimates that in the five years to 2015 there is going to be a demand for an additional 180,000 people with a Certificate III/IV and 144,000 people with a Diploma across NSW.

The Government's offer to the states and territories will aim to get around an additional 375,000 students to complete qualifications over the next five years

"Workers who hold a Diploma or Advanced Diploma earn on average around \$200 a week more than those with no post school qualification," Justine said.

"For workers in our local area who don't hold a post school qualification, it could mean \$400,000 more over their working life if they improved their skills to a Certificate III level or higher.

"I want to make sure locals have every opportunity to undertake further education and training in order to get these jobs in demand."

Justine said one of the barriers to vocational education for many people was currently the upfront fees.

Under the offer, the Government would:

Abolish upfront fees for 60,000 students a year in vocational education and training - by providing interest-free, deferred loans for all students studying publicly-subsidised diplomas and advanced diplomas

Give every Australian who wants one a guaranteed place in vocational training up to their first Certificate III, by providing a National Training Entitlement.

"No longer will local people be locked out of a higher qualification simply because they can't pay the fees upfront," Justine said.

"Opening up a HECS-style system will put those wanting to undertake vocational education and training on a level footing with university students for the first time."

Justine said another part of the Government's skills plan would be a new My Skills website, to be launched later this year.

The website will be a one-stop-shop for students to compare courses, fees, providers and the quality of training on offer.

"This new My Skills website will allow students to keep track of their qualification and training, as they up-skill and re-skill throughout their career, Justine said.

"It will give people key information on the performance, quality and cost of training providers and allow them to make an informed choice."

The blueprint released today – *Skills for All Australians* – outlines the skills challenge facing the nation and the Gillard Government's offer to the states and territories, to be taken to next month's COAG meeting.

The Gillard Government has put \$1.75 billion on the table to work with the states and territories to deliver on these reforms, in



addition to the \$1.4 billion the Government already provides to them each year. For more information visit www.pm.gov.au

International Women's Day – 8th March 2012

The Federal Labor Government is determined to advance equality between women and men focusing on three priority areas: reducing violence against women; improving women's economic security and ensuring women's equal place in society.

Since November 2007, the Labor Government has delivered a substantial number of practical initiatives to advance gender equality in Australia, including:

The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children with over \$86 million already committed to initiatives in the

Plan

The *Fair Work Act*, including improved equal remuneration provisions, and the introduction of Australia's first Paid Parental Leave Scheme

A strengthening of the Sex Discrimination Act, and removal of gender restrictions from Australian Defence Force combat roles.

The Federal Labor Government has welcomed the Fair Work Australia decision to award significant wage increases to social and community service workers.

This is the first ever successful pay equity claim in the national system and a significant advance for equal pay for women.

The Government believes that equality benefits everyone, women and men, and that equality is best achieved by women and men working constructively together - gender equality is not just women's issue.

The Federal Labor Government will continue to build on our early achievements through:

- Implementing the reforms to modernise the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act* and Agency;
- Achieving 40 per cent representation of women and men on Australian Government boards and bodies by 2015;
- Delivering a *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*.

These and numerous other commitments will deliver practical, tangible reforms to help women in this country reach their potential – which is good news for all Australians, including women.

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From the Mayor's desk

by Jenny Dowell

Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au

As I write my column, I can't help but notice today's date, March 27, is the 8th anniversary of my election to Council. Time flies when you're having fun and I can truly say that being an elected representative is a wonderful privilege – and it is also (mostly) fun! Perhaps some of NGT's readers might like to consider nominating for election to become a Councillor on September 8 this year and find out how wonderful it is to work on delivering on our community's goals and aspirations.

The March meeting of Council was the shortest in my eight years on Council. We finished in just over two hours. There was nothing too controversial on the agenda and in fact the most debate was over the selection of a piece of public art to go on a large concrete wall at the new Woolworths supermarket development in Goonellabah. The Public Art Contributions Policy requires provision of funds by the proponent of any development of over \$2 million. Woolworths provided \$15,000 and the Public Art Reference Group oversaw a selection process. The



successful artist is Karla Dickens, a Wiradjuri award-winning artist who now calls our region home.

Library

Readers who might be following the saga of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library will know that the four constituent Councils are having trouble agreeing on a model for the delivery of services. The library continues to operate at its usual excellent standard with no reduction of service and it will continue to do so while the four councils remain committed to a cooperative approach. Byron Shire Council has made it plain that it will not accept the proposed model with Lismore as the executive council and the latest twist is that Tweed Shire Council does not want a county council model. The committee made up of delegates from the member councils will

meet next month to try and find a way forward.

Roads

In the March meeting, we also endorsed the Capital Works Program for our Urban and Rural Roads and received a report on the projects for expenditure of a \$50,000 grant received for roadside vegetation management. The funds will be used to manage the vegetation and restore habitat in three locations of threatened flora species. The locations include Nimbin Road at Boorie Creek, Numulgi Road south of Lockton Road at Woodlawn and Mackie Road north of Elliot Road Clunes.

CBD shop

March also saw the opening of Council's Save n Waste shop at the CBD Office in Magellan St Lismore. This shop sells lots of wonderful products to reduce our environmental footprint including fully compostable babies' nappies, bio bags for food scraps and lots of great gift ideas. The CBD Centre is open 8.30-4.30 every day and also provides a drop off point for recyclables such as X-rays, batteries, fluoro tubes, glasses, corks, printer cartridges and more.

Arts everywhere

Visual arts are an important aspect of life in our local

government area. The Nimbin Autumn Arts Extravaganza in the Nimbin School of Arts is an annual delight and this month is also the time to catch the \$10,000 Lismore Portrait Prize at the Regional Art Gallery. I'm delighted that Clunes artist Vlad Kolas won this year's Prize with his self portrait. Visitors to the exhibition can also vote for their favorite. The most popular work will be announced as the People's Choice later in the exhibition.

Speaking of art, I'm also looking forward to officially launching Jimmy Willing's murals at the Nimbin hotel. Jimmy is a well known local musician with a highly recognizable painting style that lends itself to murals and public art.

Postcards

April 13-22 is Youth Week in NSW and among activities, Council will be re-exhibiting *Postcards from the Heart*, the wonderful show of postcards written by those of us over 50 years of age to our 16 year old selves and shown as part of Art in the Heart in Lismore during Seniors Week in March. If you missed the exhibition or if you are or know a young person, it is really worth catching this heart-warming exhibition. The postcards are poignant, funny, sad and

uplifting and really help bridge the generation gap.

Lots on

April also brings Easter, Anzac Day and, on April 28-29, Lismore and Villages Relay for Life at Southern Cross University sports field. How about forming or joining a team for this Cancer Council fundraiser that is also a wonderful community building event.

CSG

Coal Seam Gas is shaping up to be the biggest issue facing our community in a generation. In April, I will be proposing that Council holds a poll in conjunction with the September 8 election to measure the community's desire for a CSG-free Lismore LGA. The poll will cost some money but we have this golden opportunity to get an accurate measure of community attitudes that will either support or refute the view I hear that true community opposition to CSG is small.

Your Plan

Finally, at the end of April, Council will embark on the community meetings that will shape the ten-year Community Strategic Plan. This is YOUR Plan, not Council's so to ensure it is the best plan for your community that it possibly can be, it is vital that your voice is heard.



Simon says

by Cr Simon Clough

I'm very grumpy about daylight saving again! Maybe this year Barry O'Farrell will do something about the 2-3 months that we spend with dark mornings for the sake of city-based electorates. Apart from anything else it's really dangerous for we early morning cyclists.

I've been in the fast lane of busyness lately, which is not somewhere I want to be generally. However the movement to stop coal seam gas (CSG) mining is very urgent and demanding. The Lismore group which started with an amazing meeting

of 600 people is still getting around 200 people to its regular meetings. The amount of work that has been done is phenomenal. There is a large rally and concert planned for Lismore on May 12th. The rally will be about the NSW Upper House report on CSG which we are reliably informed will be supportive of the industry. Then there is 'CSG The Musical' with Ollie Heathwood. Ollie has already done several large-scale community musicals in Lismore with overwhelming success.

It seems that the anti-CSG 'local roads campaign' is going viral with Nimbin starting spontaneously, to survey all roads leading to Nimbin. The redoubtable and multi-talented Len Martin is leading the Nimbin campaign. See more about this at www.csgfreenorthrivers.org

The CSG-free roads meeting at The Channon hall was very exciting with 120 people attending and \$1,700 raised. But the main event was the organising

of teams to survey all the roads surrounding The Channon to establish people's views on CSG. I was amazed at the buzz of energy and commitment as groups organised on the basis of roads with even a few unexpected roads being covered. Well, the results are in and 99.3% of the 432 residents surveyed do not want CSG mining on their road! So the signs saying 'This Road is Gasfield Free, Protected by the community, Lock the gate, Lock the road, Protect the community' should be going up soon.

There will be a major community ceremony at Coronation Park at The Channon on the afternoon of Saturday 14th April to celebrate closing the roads to CSG. This event will be filmed for YouTube to show other communities how they can do similar activities.

Jenny Dowell, our tireless Mayor, is proposing that there be a poll of voters at the local government elections on the question of whether to have CSG in our local government area. While a poll may cost an additional \$10,000 I believe it very important to send a message to everyone, especially

politicians, that CSG is not wanted here. Without a poll we are stuck in the 'it's only a handful of noisy ratbags' argument. If this poll is successful we will then have a basis for putting up signs around the local government area reading 'CSG Free'. Such signs will not have any legal weight, but will clearly show that miners do not have a 'social license' to mine in the area.

There was another angry letter in the local paper declaring that the draft local environment plan (DLEP) is a major attack on farmers' rights and how hypocritical it is for Councillors to oppose CSG mining and not oppose the DLEP. The comparison is stunning. The DLEP is designed to protect a very small 2% of our natural environment and is only considered if there is a development application. CSG allows drilling within 200 metres of a house and is virtually unstoppable anywhere. I recently asked a specialist lawyer if he had ever seen a case where CSG miners were denied entry into a property when the landowner had objected and the matter had gone to arbitration. 'No', was the

immediate reply. We have a situation where CSG miners can walk into almost every property in the region and with minimum regulation and no land owner consent start producing large quantities of salty polluted water, pollute underground water, create roads, pipelines, release toxic gases and this is believed to be the equivalent of Council's local environment plan! I think there must be a political motive here.

A reminder that local government elections are only 5 months away (September 5th). Given a general shift in voter sentiment (see Qld elections) away from concerns about sustainability,

environmental protection, climate change and renewable energy, it is crucial that we maintain these priorities at a local council level. On Lismore City Council the support for these issues is in a delicate balance, and your vote could make the difference. It's that time when everyone needs to check that they are enrolled to vote. Enrolment forms are available at the Post Office. So if you want to have some power in local decision making enrol before 30th July.

Have a happy and safe MardiGrass.

You can follow me on Facebook – Cr Simon Clough, Lismore City Council. Phone 02 6624-2894 Mobile 0428-886-217

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2012 Mardigrass – More relevant than ever

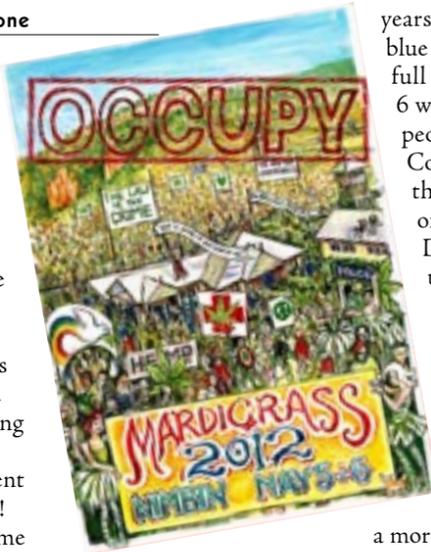
by Michael Balderstone

The first MardiGrass march twenty years ago went ahead despite permission being knocked back by the police. Same the next year. In 2012 we nearly had to do the same, but times have changed. MardiGrass has a reputation, and lawyers are threatening injunctions in the Land and Environment Court, and litigation! The system has become all head and no heart.

Insurance companies rule guaranteeing the employment of an army of lawyers. We can't afford any of it and tried to argue we are a protest that doesn't need a DA. Luckily the silly naive hippies were rescued by law students from SCU and an excellent bound (five copies!) DA was submitted.

The MardiGrass Organising Body is a loose collection of protestors who have one big factor in common. Everyone is sick and tired of our unfair and unnecessary criminal tag. This is our annual effort to get cannabis law reform on the agenda, and the police may not have the resources to stop pot use, but they can certainly make a mess of our protest.

As it turns out, now a bigger and better DA than ever is on the table and our idea of simplifying the weekend is out the window. We expect the first weekend in May to have a similar structure to previous



years. With hopefully a bright blue sky holding high the full moon on Sunday May 6 when all the enlightened people from the North Coast who know full well the shocking consequences of the so-called "War on Drugs" come to support us. In truth it's only a war on certain drugs, the ones not owned by giant pharmaceutical companies who are ruthless in maintaining their monopoly on planetary pain management. Is there a more profitable business?

We all want a compassionate society and it's up to us to try and keep the idea of drug law reform on the political agenda. The police keep reminding us we should be marching on the politicians and that's exactly what we plan to do on May 1 in Lismore. We hope many North Coast people who don't want to visit Nimbin for MardiGrass, will come midday May 1 to the Lismore Court House for a Cannabis Law Reform Rally and the walk to Janelle Saffin's and Thomas George's offices. These are the people representing us, and in fact are our lawmakers and law changers. We also suggest protestors come wearing their suits instead of tie dye shirts like when they visit Nimbin. For the people who are understandably worried about losing their jobs we'll bring along masks and disguises on the day, if you can't sort it yourself!

The extraordinary recent right wing drug law changes in WA which introduced

mandatory jail for exposing children to harm through making, growing or preparing illicit drugs, is of real concern. How come Australia is heading in this direction and the rest of the world another? 72% of Americans now have legal access to medical marijuana. Britain has virtually decriminalised. We look like getting Tony Abbott as PM as the various Australian states all change colour.

The Greens are currently trying to get a medical cannabis trial happening in NSW and we are very grateful NSW Senator John Kaye is joining the Forums at MardiGrass 2012. We also appreciate how he has stood by Mullaways Medical Cannabis Pty Ltd., which is a federally registered drug company, according to director Tony Bower. Tony is an Aboriginal who maintains his culture forbids him from refusing to help people if he can and his company has strived for years now to do the right thing by the authorities.

Not only in Aboriginal communities across Australia, thousands of cannabis users spend their cash buying their medicine for between \$20 and \$50 or more per gram. For a plant they could grow in their backyard! And they wonder why so many Aboriginal people especially (who come from a culture of sharing virtually opposite to this society's values) are filling our jails in extremely disproportionate numbers. Over 50% of juveniles locked up in Australia are Aboriginal while they make up about 2% of the population. As usual, local Elders will lead the MardiGrass rally for cannabis law reform this year.

Full program at: www.nimbinmardigrass.com



Nimbin's Ganja Faeries are preparing now for the MardiGrass Parade. We are rehearsing every Thursday at 5.30pm at the Community Centre's Dance Studio, and we always welcome new Faeries.

The Faeries finally have a home. We have been able to rent a room to store our costumes and props that we have accumulated. Every year the Faeries work hard to create the costumes for the Parade and to buy fabric to help new Faeries look fabulous.

If anyone out there has Ganja Faerie costumes and are not intending to be part of the Faerie Float in the MardiGrass Parade, please return them to the Faeries. You can call Chantico on 0428-337-068 to organise a drop-off.



STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

MardiGrass Unda Chaos by Undacuva

I discovered two of Pipe's bush fairies in the Emporium stocking up on brown rice. Tinkerbell clung to me sobbing. "Pipe might die," they said, "and he doesn't care." More sobbing.

Apparently they found him halfway back from the patch, black with leeches.

He'd taken his shirt off to scratch some off his back on the bark of a gnarly tree then got leeches in both eyes and headed back leaving his shirt behind. It was a tragic mistake.

"Leeches were marching towards me bleeding back like an army," he told me. He couldn't reach them to pull them off, so made a run for home but ran out of puff. The

fairies got a bad feeling and went looking for him. "The leeches had sucked every last ounce out of him," Tinker told me.

She also said he's completely depressed, not about the leeches, but the rotting crop. I visited him in the Nimbin hospital where he was refusing all their food and insisted on the girls cooking for him and bringing meals in.

"The crop's almost gone with mould marching up the trunks faster than the leeches," he told me. I told him how leeches were Australia's first export back to the mother country. Somehow that cheered him up.

Who would have thought Canberra eyes were watching the *GoodTimes* get ready for print? Except that lawyers rule, with



April Fool: It's industrial hemp

insurance companies. The story I wrote last month was altered, hacked. Just a small but extremely significant alteration. Pipe didn't have an average of "about 50" leeches each day, it was "about 500".

Some nerd in the Feds, forever watching all things Nimbin, alerted the lawyers regarding Pipe's litigation against the PM and believe it or not, they considered it a real concern and ordered the numbers altered.

It was embarrassingly easy to mangle the MardiGrass organisers once I found their meeting place. With special Unda access to confiscations, I ordered a pound from Kempsey Station of Mullaways recently captured primo. Picked perfectly ripe

and barely dry it was.

No one noticed when I slipped several pre-rolled fatties into the meeting circle of about forty lunatic hippies all wanting their weed laws changed yesterday. It's harder to pretend to believe in the drug war than it is to pretend to be a hippy, but I got a job to do.

Within minutes the Mullaway joints had everyone ten to the dozen with so many ideas rattling round it's no wonder Council's swimming in utter confusion.

The bald and stoned one and a couple of others tried to get some sanity at the meeting but were soon shouted down and someone even offered him a ticket to Cambodia for a trip down the Mekong during the month

of May. He wouldn't go, so I picked it up. No one seemed to notice. It's a wonder they can organise themselves to get dressed in the morning. Something I have to be very mindful about!

I didn't tell the Boss it was my idea, I whispered to one of the old hippies that a protest doesn't need a DA. "The cops should look after the crowd and traffic in a protest, shouldn't they?" was all I said. Anyway the hippies lit a joint off this idea and the rest is history. The Boss had to threaten them with an injunction before they got their paperwork together.

HipiLeaks; March 2012: Julian Assange has unexpectedly found a way to run for the Senate and he's been approached by several registered parties, including HEMP. There are concerns they could gain enough votes with him at the helm. He wanted to attend their annual May protest but bail conditions prevent him. However, we expect he'll choose the Sex Party instead, given his history.

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Industrial hemp fibre farming



Farmer at Ashford windrowing the hemp in the first season of roundbaling. ABC's Landline program filmed it for an episode on industrial hemp to screen in May.

There's been quite a bit of progress in the NSW fibre industry with a steady stream of enquiries coming to the Northern Rivers Hemp Association from people interested in farming hemp.

Farmers in Ashford are continuing to grow, there's a new small farm planted near Ocean Shores, and a large seed-bulking crop being planted later this month in southern NSW. Fibre hemp is also being produced by Ecofibre Industries in the Hunter Valley.

It's a funny secretive business in part because of its regulated nature, so it's hard to know how many licences or how much land is currently planted.

However, the search for manufacturers is underway. The farmers in Ashford are producing high quality bast fibre, which in Europe has a huge market in the automobile industry. It's an excellent fibreglass replacement.

It would be great to hear from anyone who can help to link these farmers with a domestic manufacturer currently using fibreglass who would be interested in making their business more sustainable.

Anyone interested in following future developments should visit: www.hempmasonry.com

Hemp cabin at Mountaintop nears completion

by Klara Marosszeky

Last October, a couple of weekend hemp building workshops were held at Mountaintop to fund the materials for some walls for a small pole cabin at Auntie Liz's place. It will be a studio for Auntie Liz to paint and it is also the first structure of a cultural field study centre. Her hope is that there will be some other small sustainable structures as well, with a hemp masonry composting toilet being the next building planned.

A neighbour's comment that it was "ridiculously organic" describes the place well. The wallabies moved into place before the floor was laid and they check the cabin out inside on a daily basis. The fibre smells pretty good, but they seem content to lie about.

The window sills, roofing and decking timbers were milled on site from an old blue gum whose widespread branches threatened both Auntie Liz's current home and the new cabin. A good friend supplied some poles from his land at a really generous price and helped Auntie Liz and her family to stand them and build the frame.

17 students from outside the region attended the first two day workshop. Some travelled from Sydney, Canberra, the south coast of NSW, Bellingen and the Blue Mountains, others came from Queensland. We laid a hemp floor, completed the first level of the walls and many of us experienced our first storm at

Mountaintop. Something to reckon with. Despite that, we had a baked dinner and the campfire under its tin roof kept going.

The floor is a first for me, although hemp floors are common in the UK. It's much more forgiving underfoot than concrete and has come up really well despite copping more than the occasional deluge when the tarps filled up too quickly.

The second workshop was for Aboriginal builders and labourers and it was funded by Dept of Industry Innovation and Investment. This workshop is a part of a larger project to enable Aboriginal communities to determine whether they are interested in growing industrial hemp where they have suitable land and building hemp homes. Hemp masonry is carbon neutral and providing the fibre is grown at least domestically and preferably regionally, it has a very valuable role to play in carbon storage. Housing construction currently accounts for about 40% of our carbon footprint.

Both the weekend workshops and the working bees that have happened since have been supported by local volunteers too numerous to mention individually here. Their help has been invaluable from feeding the students and crew, to lending tools and equipment, carting materials, rebuilding parts of the camp after severe storms, to building formwork and filling walls. Thank you.

Although the cabin has been built without the roof on it's now time to get it covered



so the building can be finished. The plan is to put sheet bracing above the rafters, then a geotextile, on top of which there will be 50mm of hemp insulation and then the tin will go over that.

Please continue to support the raffle. So far we have raised over \$240 towards the roofing materials. We need around \$750 in total to complete the roof. The first six prizes will be drawn at the Oasis Café on Wednesday 25th January, next year.



The first layer of the floor has been put down in 50mm layers then tamped. Then we did the first layer of the walls.

Growing a new carbon economy



by Wayne Wadsworth

Anything made from oil gas and coal seam gas, Hydrocarbons, can be made from Plants, Carbohydrates. Carbon and cellulose are the most abundant renewable resource on the planet. And the most useful plants that grow the most cellulose and carbon are Bamboo and Hemp.

Bamboo will give us up to 100 tons of biomass per hectare per year, without cultivation, while hemp will give us up to 30 tons of biomass per hectare per year, with cultivation.

The carbon problem

If humanity is to survive and thrive economically and more importantly socially we will have to turn off the fossil fuel and mining industries

within the next twenty or so years. If carbon levels go to 500 parts per million we are in very uncharted territory.

So what happens when the oil and coal run out? Well it's not really an issue, as the planet will be well and truly stuffed long before we run out of fossil fuels.

The carbon solution

All plants, when growing, take up carbon from the atmosphere and return carbon to the atmosphere through photosynthesis, respiration and the rotting process.

If we can intervene via pyrolysis in the rotting process we can vastly slow down carbon returning to the atmosphere for many thousands of years! This withdraws carbon from its natural cycle and in effect brings

down carbon from the atmosphere while at the same time improving farm soils to grow more carbon!

What is pyrolysis?

Simply put, the heating of organic or inorganic carbon based material that separates the gases and oils from the material and leaves stable carbon behind. In the case of organic material such as bamboo it turns it into charcoal or the more sexy word Biochar.

We all know how fast bamboo roots when left out in the elements. However when the bamboo is turned to Biochar it becomes very stable and can last in the soil for thousands of years.

Bamboo biochar workshops

The Bamboo Society has recently run a couple of bamboo Biochar workshops, one in Maleny run by Hans Irkin and Paul Taylor and one on the Patanga community near Bellingen by Wadzy and Andrew Usher.

The participants at the Patanga workshop learned how to make a simple TLUD Top Lift Updraft Gasifier using 44-gallon drums. We also visited the fabulous Bartok at Andrew's place (pictured).

The Bellingen area shows great potential for establishing bamboo industries. Running bamboo is very common with some communities including Patanga paying thousands of dollars to have it removed. Unfortunately the asset right under

the nose of communities has not been managed and fully utilized.

Andrew and myself are planning another workshop in May.

Fibre industry regional enterprises

The bamboo and hemp industries are in their infancy in Australia and thanks to dedicated enthusiasts and growers both potential large-scale industries could be ramped up.

Many country towns would be revitalized if they changed their crop production to bamboo and hemp. In the cotton growing areas where large-scale irrigation is practised, species such as Old hami and latifloris could be grown with intercropping of industrial hemp or even cotton until the bamboo gets into full production after five to seven years.

Imagine all the people buying consumer goods made from farm grown crops. At the end of their life cycle they could be Pyrolysed and returned to the soil!

The Bamboo Society

I believe the Bamboo Society has an important role to play in the development of large scale bamboo plantations. One of the problems is that we don't have enough bamboo growing to ramp up the industry and we will need to import large amounts if we wanted to convert places like Cubby Station.

Grow more India

The taboo subject of tissue culture,

which many growers have had bad experience with, will need to be discussed in the industry. My good friend Dr Bamboo Barathi from India has a tissue culture factory that produces one hundred thousand plants a week. I have purchased and used this bamboo on a treated sewage mop crop and carbon offset project I did in the Maldives with very good results. Dr Bamboo is building power stations in India to run on bamboo!

The laboratory at Growmore has an annual capacity to produce over 10 million tissue cultured plants depending on the plant species under production. The growing room at Growmore has Infrastructure to grow 2-3 million plants at any given time. The lab has been accredited by the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) for exporting tissue culture plants free of media from India.

Dr Bamboo's website is well worth a visit at: www.growmorebiotech.com

Carbon mop cropping

If we are to mop up excess carbon from the atmosphere, bamboo and hemp will not only foot the bill but also they will revitalize rural communities and create badly needed rural jobs.

I believe we could quickly develop large-scale bamboo plantations with the help of my good friend Dr Bamboo. Let's hope for our sakes and the sake of Mother Earth, we can build the industries ASAP.

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