

MardiGrass and the Police

by Graham Irvine

Most of the police officers who come to Nimbin for MardiGrass treat it as the spectacle it is and most merely observe the proceedings because there are seldom any disturbances and so they are not needed to keep the peace.

This year the word is that the new Regional Commander is sick of telling his officers to enforce the unenforceable 'War on Drugs' laws. Going by recent reports this counter-productive legislation has by all accounts, reached its 'use by' date.

Presently some Nimbin community members are locked in a court battle to stop the roadblocks and raids on Nimbin each year, but they do not expect that the action will be decided by Mardi Grass.

In the meantime, if you are thinking about bringing illegal drugs with you, be careful of roadblocks. They have three favourite spots – at Goolmangar, about 10 km from Lismore on the Lismore Road; on Blue Knob Road near the cemetery, 3 km from Nimbin; and near the corner of Tuntable Creek Road and the road to Mount Nardi, about 6 km from Nimbin, but they could be anywhere.

In the last few years police have carefully planned their strategies, giving the operation a code name

and gathering 50 or more officers, including the Dog Squad (sniffer dogs) and the Tactical Response Team, the thug-like enforcers, distinctive in their black clothes and threatening manner – stay away from them. And along with them, police sometimes bring officers from the Roads and Traffic Authority, the government body with powers over vehicles and roads, and, last year, officials from the Immigration Department accompanied them, checking passports and visas.

In New South Wales, when searching people or vehicles, police have the authority to ask for your name and address (but not your mobile or other telephone number), and you have the right to ask them for their name, badge number, (or, if they are not in uniform, their identification), the station from which they work and the reason for the search.

While police have the right to search your vehicle and all the people in it for drugs, sometimes using a dog to assist, they do not usually have the right to strip search you. Generally, if police try to engage you in conversation or to question you, unless you have a good knowledge of the way the laws operate, you should say as little as you have to.

Anyway let us hope for good behaviour from us all in this, the 20th MardiGrass.

From Pickers Ball to Main Stage



Andrea Soler band

MardiGrass 2012 is here. This weekend the festivities start with a Welcome to Country ceremony to be held at 5pm closely followed by an of artists, local and from afar at the Pickers' Balls in the Town Hall from 6pm.

Local girl Essie Thomas will launch her new album at 7pm followed by Diana Anaid and local Manu with Express. Rocking Dub reggae band will join us all the way from Tassie at 10pm and the night will finish with Pagan Love Cult.

Over the weekend the days will be jammed with green goodness, including talks, forums and the Kombi Konvoy and 4:20 light-up on Saturday. There will be three stages around town running music from as early as 10am each morning, as well as morning yoga in the market space at 9am on Saturday and Sunday.

The stages are located in the Market Space (behind the community centre) running from 9am until 10pm.

Mingle Park Stage (behind the Museum) will be running from noon

Saturday and Sunday, holding hip-hop workshops at 1pm each day, and a top line up of Hip Hop musicians and MC's 'til 10pm on Saturday and 8.30pm on Sunday.

Our Main stage is weather dependent, with high hopes for dry ground in Peace Park. However, if the conditions are poor the main stage will go ahead in the Town Hall. Highlights for the main stage are local woman Andrea Soler playing before the comedy between 8pm and 10pm on Saturday. Following this will be Anarchist Duck and long time MardiGrass musicians Fyah Walk. Sunday holds performances from Sydney hot shots Warchief, Tazzy crew Dublo, plus The Floating Bridges, and will finish with a bang from Funken' Brissy group Elektrik Lemonade.

Full program on MardiGrass website: www.nimbinmardigrass.com



Anarchist Duck



The MardiGrass Comedy Show will fill the Nimbin Town Hall with laughs on Saturday night, 5th May, when that master of wobbly mirth, Steady Eddy takes the stage.

The show will be presented by Alan Glover and S Sorrensen, who have been hosting this event since its inception at the Oasis Cafe. By day the comedy duo use their athletic knowledge to commentate the Hemp Olympix, and by night they are the funniest two person stand-up act in the country. (Maybe the only one.)

Steady Eddy (pictured) hit the Australian comedy scene with a bang in the early 90s, quickly becoming a top headline act at comedy clubs around the country, appearing frequently on *The Midday Show* with Ray Martin and *Tonight Live* with Steve Vizard.

Steady lived the high life, but now he is fascinated by all things alternative...

The gig starts at 8pm. Entry is with a MardiGrass armband or \$15/10 at the door.

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

Pipedreams with Unda
by Undacuva

After collecting him at the hospital I drove Pipe back to the commune and he talked

more than I've ever heard before. The LIAR (Leech Impact Assessment Report) cracked him up almost as much as the news he now needs a licence to hitchhike.

"The tribe prevents isolation," he kept repeating. "And because we share and live closely with each other we don't have many secrets." He stared at me for far too long after he said it.

I looked away at first, but eventually told him straight, "I can't tell you. I'd be petfood," and after a while, as lightly as I could, "Then you'd have to pay the supermarket bill."

The cave was a hive of faeries sitting on piles of rugs sewing Mardigrass outfits amongst two and three metre drapes of giant colas swinging in the soft breeze. Hanging upside down from bamboo poles jammed in the sandy floor like fishermen at the beach, each rod had landed a two pound Mullaway!

What survived the grey creeping mould (named Howard by Pipe) was massive



from the regular rain all summer.

Pipe reckoned growing weed in the wilderness was like setting traps for wild dogs in the outback. You never know what you'll find when you do the rounds.

The Mullaways that Howard didn't get were as big as any he'd ever seen, and although his patch was lost, he knew the tribe had a stash to last the year and his depression soon lifted.

The girls were funny with me a bit and I realised he must have said something so early next morning I headed off. Pipe insisted on throwing at least half a pound on the back seat, half dry and stinking like a pole cat.

I drove straight to the

hideaway, hung up the pot to finish drying and spent three hours transforming into the opposite sex and twenty years older.

I told the Boss I won't play alcoholics anymore, it's killing me. "I can smoke any amount of the evil weed Boss, but the grog is murder." He could clearly see it for himself but it was so hard for him to sign off on letting me get stoned to the gills every day to just have a good time and not have a worry in the world. Like the 'creatures from Nimbin street', or 'the useless druggies', as he kept calling them, us.

He's also been instructed from above to infiltrate the new cult supporting the "war on work". He spat the words

out like it spelt nazi. "They say they're saving the planet with their war."

I didn't tell him I'd been hanging out with these war on work veterans for years and in fact some of them were my best mates. "No jobs on a dead planet' is their motto, Boss."

It stopped him for just a moment. "Most of them never had a job and wouldn't recognise one if it bit them on the arse."

Soon I'm talking to myself in Cheryl-speak as I get warmed up and into her skin. She's a hippy marketeer from Fremantle. I phoned in and booked a stall at the MardiGrass market. The Boss gave me a wad of cash to splash and I'm selling all sorts of bright hippy gear from a brand new tent, so watch out for me.

HipiLeaks April 2012. Police sleeping at their desks will have to make up lost hours in the future. New figures show an alarming increase in use of the station sick beds by those working a second job as security. The red pills are for keeping you awake. Please use them.

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May Gigs

| | | |
|---------------|--------|--|
| Friday 4th | | Khanage |
| Saturday 5th | 1.30pm | Azadoota |
| | 6.30pm | Resin Dogs Sound System |
| | | + Fort Kilsby, DJ's Katch, D'no |
| Sunday 6th | 1.30pm | Blue Skillet Rovers |
| | 6pm | Andrea Soler |
| Thursday 10th | 6pm | Guy Kachel |
| Friday 11th | 7.30pm | Boardfoot |
| Saturday 12th | 6.30pm | Colourrunner |
| Sunday 13th | 2.30pm | David Knight |
| Thursday 17th | 6pm | TBA |
| Friday 18th | 7.30pm | Thorazoo |
| Saturday 19th | 6.30pm | TBA |
| Sunday 20th | 2.30pm | Chris Fisher |
| Thursday 24th | 6pm | Bill Jacobi |
| Friday 25th | 7.30pm | Bad Influence |
| Saturday 26th | 7pm | DJ with fantastic light show |
| Sunday 27th | 2pm | Ebony |
| Thursday 31st | 6.30pm | TBA |

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Diana Anaid

Haight Ashbury Reprise

It was a sell out in Nimbin last December and now it returns for one night only on Friday 18th May.

The Songs of the Haight Ashbury Stage Show celebrates the musical legacy of our revolutionary forebears who in 1967 transformed the social fabric of America in a spontaneous cultural explosion that became known as The Summer of Love.

This artistic vanguard explored the musical landscape fearlessly and it is no surprise that powerful music was created that would go on to transform popular culture.

Your host and guide is author and comedian, S Sorrensen. He takes the audience on a touching and hilarious ride through this impressive musical era as performed by world-class musicians.

James T will perform the songs with which he toured the world for 10 years as the singer, harmonica player and guitarist with Canned Heat.

Multi-award winning Lil'Fi will sing Janis Joplin with an unique authority that comes from living the life of a true blues mama, this spirit-raiser has been described as channeling Janis.



Lil'Fi

Connor Cleary, hailed as one of the region's most exciting guitarists, breathes Jimi Hendrix from every cell and is an electrifying performer, while Bill Jacobi's sweet finger-pickin-tramp-roots style will conjure Country Joe, Arlo Guthrie and Dylan.

World-folk troubadour Andrea Soler will sing Joni Mitchell and mystical punk diva Diana Anaid will perform the music of Grace Slick and Jefferson Airplane as only one who has been down the rabbit hole can.

Songs of the Haight Ashbury stage show at Nimbin Bush Theatre 8pm Friday 18th May and Kyogle Memorial Hall 8pm Saturday 19th May. \$25.

More details at www.rainbowregiongigs.com



Shibori Dyed Felt 'Cocoon Jacket' by Polly Stirling

The Blue Knob Gallery's annual fibre show is on again. 'Of Fibre' will be a diverse show with many creative forms of fibre art.

Whether of traditional or contemporary origin, natural or man-made; the 'humble' fibre can also be; sustainable, naturally beautiful, tenacious physically fit, enduring, alluring, truly capable and full of expression.

Fibre artists are still able to submit work for this exhibition – it will need to be in by Sunday 13th May.

A one day workshop which explores ways to use sheer fabrics and surface design to create a unique lightweight felt scarf or felted fabric.

The workshop will run from 10am to 4pm at the Moore Workshop Space, Blue Knob Hall Gallery. The fee of \$75 includes handouts and tea and coffee in class. (Lunch and snacks are available at the Café or bring your own.) A deposit is required to secure your place in the class.

Please phone Barbara (02)6689-1763 or email barbfelt@hotmail.com

Opening night is Friday 18th May from 6.30pm with a set meal available from the Café for \$15 per person, \$4 for dessert. Bookings are essential.

The exhibition runs until 8th July.

Workshops

Fibre Fusion with Barbara Mills, Sunday 20th May

Blue Knob Farmer's Market

The market is held in the grounds of Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Cafe every Saturday from 8.30am to 1pm. A great range of fruit, veggies, seedlings, wood fired breads and delicious pastries, as well as local home-made produce. The grain mill is also available to grind your own grains or buy from the market.

Artists and Friends Lunch

Held on the last Thursday of each month at 12pm – the next one will be held on Thursday 29th May. Cost is \$15 per person for set mains and dessert. Please ring the Gallery on 6689-7449 if you are planning on coming along.

Yum Cha

Held every second Saturday of the month – the next one being on Saturday 12th May at 12pm. Bookings are absolutely essential phone 6689-7449. Please notify us of any special dietary requirements.

A great way to catch up with friends in a beautiful setting, sampling Steph's lovely chinese delicacies with a pot of endless green tea.



Waratah by Suzanne MacGauley



Poppies by Helena Herendi

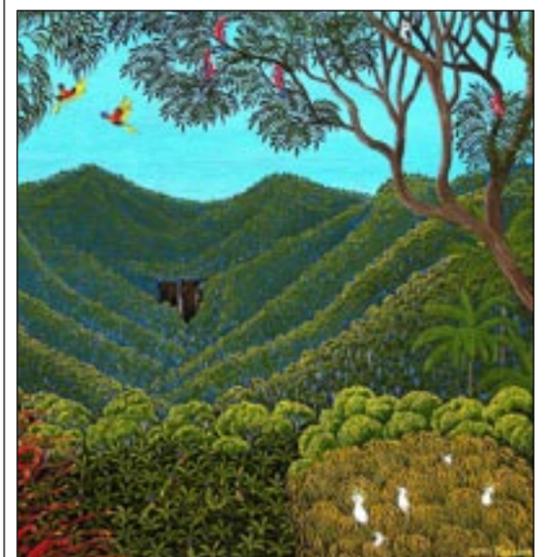
by Peter Ptschelinzew

Well, Nimbin's Autumn Arts Extravaganza has come and gone for another year. Some 8,000 people visited the exhibition leaving many favourable comments and a contribution to our local economy through their purchases.

We'd like to congratulate all contributing artists for their inspiring work. It was an outstanding display of the quality and diversity of art produced, for the most part, directly around Nimbin. And many thanks to all those who helped in the set up, pack up and day-to-day running of the Extravaganza. Certainly a case of many hands make light work.

But there is plenty of life after the Extravaganza with a fresh hanging having taken place after the end of the exhibition. Some unsold work has found its way into the gallery perhaps giving you a second chance to acquire that favourite piece. And we have some new art submitted by local artists, so don't think you've already seen it all. Come and stop by.

Tuntable Falls by Denis Meagher (detail)



CABARET SEEKS REGION'S BEST AND MOST BIZARRE



After three sell-out years, the search is on again for the Northern Rivers' most original, bizarre and talented professional, semi-professional and closet community performers for the Ukitopia Arts

Collective's annual Cabaret 360.

Auditions will be held on May 7 and 13 in Uki for young and old performers from dance, circus, music, comedy, physical theatre, performance poetry, wearable art and more.

Cabaret 360 Director Hamilton Barnett

said the event - now in its fourth year and being held on June 8 and 9 - had really cemented itself as a feast of performance, proving itself to be a place to come and experience a diverse array of highly entertaining performance.

"We're looking for five minute acts and we usually feature 20 to 30 acts in what's become a slick production, as we transform the Uki Hall into a theatre in the round," Hamilton said.

"We really encourage people to audition, and work hard to try to support them to bring out the very best in their performance."

Hamilton said while music and visual arts were really well represented in the region, Cabaret 360 was a rare opportunity

for other performance acts to be involved.

"It's also an ideal opportunity for professional performers to do something a bit left of their usual field, such as the well known musician who performed wearing nothing but balloons, which was a real highlight from the first Cabaret 360," Hamilton said.

This year's cabaret would be strictly M-rated so performers and audience members needed to be over 15, and preference will be given to original, contemporary pieces.

Auditions for Cabaret 360 will be held in Uki on Monday, 7th May at 6pm and on Sunday, 13th May at 4pm. To audition or for further information contact Hamilton Barnett on 0439-021-233 or email: cabaret360@gmail.com

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Koala Kolumn



Georgina on-track for release, nothing is guaranteed in koala caring

by Lorraine Vass

Koala rescuers and carers play a significant part in koala conservation. Without them and their supporting organisations, there would be even fewer free-ranging koalas. Hundreds of injured, sick or orphaned koalas are returned to the wild annually, by members of koala rehab. groups.

Recently I was asked about the number of such folk across the country. I have no idea. About 80 members of Friends of the Koala are authorised to rescue and care for koalas. Perhaps half only rescue. Most of our carers participate in the Koala Care Centre Roster; there are four or five home-carers. I suggested a guestimate of about 1,200-1,500 nationally.

Native wildlife rehabilitation is regulated by State and Territory governments. In NSW the norm is for a licence to be issued to a group which is responsible for authorising certain of its members to work under its licence. Authorisation involves training, supervision and compliance with a code of practice.

The licence enables the licence-holder to harm (i.e. capture or kill) injured, sick and orphaned animals; liberate (i.e. release or relocate) captured animals; hold animals (primarily for care and/or treatment); and to identify (i.e. tag, band or microchip) captured animals. Although government relies on wildlife groups and their members to provide animal rescue and rehabilitation services, it provides precious little financial support.

All sorts of people become wildlife carers. A few take on the role as part of their professional work but most wildlife rescuing and caring is undertaken by volunteers. It is hard yakka and emotionally draining, even on a rostered basis where there is team support and associated activities like leaf collection are performed by others.

For home-carers the animals in their charges have a habit of becoming central to household routines and to family life. Take Georgina's Barb Dobner for example. Barb's been a wildlife home-carer for nearly 20 years. She has home-cared koalas for near enough to a decade. The Dobner kids have grown up sharing their house with orphaned and other koalas (this may sound cute but koalas pee and aren't fussy where they do it); helping Barb cut leaf; waiting for her while she's at the vet/Care Centre/etc. Their sleep has been disrupted by midnight phone-calls and emergency rescues; they've fore-gone holidays because of the animals; a considerable amount of money has been spent on building enclosures and runs.

Barb's scrupulous caring has given countless koalas a second chance. She's the first to admit that the emotional rewards of wildlife caring are immense. But the heartache when an animal isn't going well, or worse, doesn't make it (many koalas don't), never diminishes.

Georgina was such a koala. She was found

on the ground on Riverbank Road, Monaltrie last July. She weighed a mere kilogram and she was so cold her temperature was not registering. By the end of the year she was a weaned "4kgs lump of a sook". Along with five other youngsters Georgina was removed from her enclosure to spend several weeks in a real tree, enclosed to enable observation. They were all well into their pre-release routine by early April.

Barb was replacing leaf one afternoon when she noticed that Georgina was not displaying her normal interest and energy level. She clambered up the tree and caught Georgina so she could have a proper look while continuing to replace the leaf. There was something wrong but Barb could not put her finger on it. She took Georgina inside for the night.

How can an apparently healthy koala drop condition and look 'flat' within 24 hours? There was nothing obvious. At first Barb wondered whether she had had a fall but ruled that out. Perhaps she had been bitten or had an allergic reaction? Barb thought Georgina's face looked a bit puffy; she really had no idea what was going on and felt totally helpless.

Fortunately there was a trip to the Australian Wildlife Hospital from the Koala Care Centre scheduled for the following morning. By that time Georgina's face looked a little better but she was still not herself. Barb arranged for her to go as well. Georgina didn't return. Despite expert veterinary attention she died several days later. The necropsy did not throw any light on cause of death; nor did the post mortem pathology. "One of those mysteries" was the verdict.

To all intents and purpose Georgina was a contented koala yet after ten months of uneventful nurturing, she went in a matter of days and Barb will never know why. Such is the lot of the koala carer.

By the time you read this Minister Burke will have made his announcement on whether or not the koala will be afforded protection under national law. Whatever his decision Barb and hundreds like her will continue to invest their passion and expertise into koala conservation, soaring on the highs and battling with the lows.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02)6622-1233. This number can also be used for information about koalas, their food trees, and other ways in which you can assist the koala conservation effort on the Northern Rivers.

Also visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email info@friendsofthekoala.org or follow us on Facebook.



by Rob Carroll, President

GM Food

Riceland Foods the largest rice co-op in the USA were successful in winning a lawsuit against the Bayer Corp. Riceland's natural long-grain rice was contaminated by Bayer's unapproved GM rice. Bayer's crop was for experimental purposes only and was going to be used to research GM crops. Bayer was ordered to pay Riceland \$111.8 million in compensatory damages and \$125 million in punitive damages. Bayer has had 3,000 similar lawsuits against them in recent years. They were ordered to pay 12 Arkansas farmers almost \$50 million after Bayer allowed their GM strain to escape onto the commercial market.

Poisonous Chemicals

There is a current petition in the NEC for Lismore, Kyogle and Tweed Councils to stop using poisons along the roads, parks and children's play fields.

The 70 to 80 people who have signed up until now have also agreed to hold back their land rates until the issue is solved. We have been supplying these councils with the relevant information for three years now, with very little response. Please drop in and sign.

We are also in the process of organising some "No Spray please, Organic Earth" signs and are researching to have them

printed on hemp plastic.

CSG

After our Tuesday meeting, we caught up with the crew who went on a journey to the Pilliga to collect evidence.

I was appalled at the damage being done in the state forest by the CSG lunacy – poison pits, broken dam walls and thousands of metres of dead forest where overflow has occurred. It doesn't matter whether the pits are lined or not, they still flow over into our environment.

This is a blatant disregard for all life, be it human, animal or plant species. This is why these degenerates don't belong in any communities including yours.

I went along to the Nimbin Bowlo the other Sunday and was amazed at the community involvement against CSG – we were also told of the 150 concerned people of Goolmangar who

also voted against coal seam gas. I believe this is the only way to go – stand up and say "No more." You must look at the outcome before the income.

Benefit Night

Oh What a Night!

Rain, music, comedy, slideshow, food, chai and cakes were the scene on Saturday night at the Nimbin Town Hall. The magic throughout the whole evening was felt through voice, instrument and conversation.

The benefit was organised by NEC Elder Phil, and what a fantastic event he did.

A heartfelt thankyou to each of you who made the NEC Benefit night such a blast. Thank you to the locals and distant travellers who braved the rain in support of your Nimbin Environment Centre.

A special thanks to the clowns who put a smile on everyone's face.

Also thank you to all who donated time, food and cash. The funds will be used for ongoing actions to guarantee that the future is a benefit to all.



Draw of raffle (l-r): NEC President Rob Carrol, Coordinator Lisa Costello and S. Sorrensen, won by Chibo.
Photo: A Woman with a Camera

Robert Perez to teach permaculture course in Nimbin

Permaculture College Australia is again hosting Roberto Perez (pictured) during his Australia tour, later this year.

Roberto is a co-ordinator, since 1995, for the Cuban not-for-profit organisation, the Foundation for Nature and Humanity.

During his visit in 2008, he painted a picture of a people, the Cubans, who dared to try to be different, and of the sacrifice that making such a call can make, but he also pointed out that the same situation could face anyone anywhere in the world in the next 5-10 years.

Roberto's presentations were articulate, exuberant and inspiring. He graphically



described what can happen in a country as a result of losing those life support systems that people take for granted, and how solutions can be found in Urban Agriculture, Organic Farming and Permaculture.

Roberto will be joining Robyn Francis in co-teaching this year's winter Permaculture Design Course at Djanbung Gardens in July, which is

enrolling now.

There will be other community events while he is here, where people will get the opportunity to meet and talk to Roberto. Check the website www.permaculture.com.au for advertised events.

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No-spray lantana control

by Geoff Dawe

Chemical-free bush regeneration of lantana is carried out by cutting one-to-1.2-metre-wide alleys through lantana on the contour.

The alleys are first cut mostly using machetes and loppers, and this takes a fair amount of time. None of the lantana is pulled out, and inside the newly opened area cut close to the ground and kept trimmed.

Alleys are approximately 2.7 metres apart and are kept open with regular trimming of side and immediate tops with a machete, with both chemical and chemical free regeneration. Regular return to the site is crucial to success.

Lantana was originally brought to Australia for hedges. The sides of the alleys, with regular trimming become hedge-like. After cutting a morale booster occurs in finding trimming of sides is carried out relatively easily and quickly.

Where natural regeneration has a good chance of occurring in the alleys, native seedlings are noted. After approximately three years when seedlings have grown and are dominating the lantana, the lantana begins to become 'leggy' because it does not like shade.

As the native canopy closes, the lantana dies out. In effect the native trees become the direct arbiter of the lantana, not human beings.

Sensitivity to death-dealing as a side-effect or directly, has ecosystem immune system consequences, in that there is minimal disturbance of prevailing ecosystems with death of weeds as a side-effect of human activity. Weeds gradually have no existence,



People manually clearing lantana

not because they are directly killed by human beings, but because there is no niche for them.

Direct-dealing on the other hand, except for food-gathering, is the message something doesn't belong, no matter what conditions caused it to arise. On this plane of existence, that idea has no sense.

Moving away from direct killing of lantana also has implications or ethics/morality. It becomes an exercise in healing the violence in a European consciousness that quickly drops into the divisiveness, sees an enemy and goes to war at the drop of a hat. Does anyone know for sure why we have troops in Afghanistan, for example?

In areas where natural regeneration has little chance of occurring, native trees are planted at approximately 2.7 metre spacings. Tree planting is a tool for chemical-free, as herbicide is a tool for chemical, regeneration. Concern for weakening the native gene pool with planted trees has little validity. Trees that do not belong perform poorly compared to the natural regeneration that occurs in the new conditions provided by the shading and bird seed-dispersing abilities of native 'tool' trees.

Stu's view from the loo

by Stuart McConville

Runnels and rivulets weave their way through the kikuyu sod. The neighbours' cows have poked my lawn with their stilet-toes and tromped through my ginger crop, annoying me intensely. I can't drive anything on my place without plunging deep through the topsoil, destroying the structure and leaving compacted trails. Even the ride-on sinks and slides about like a salmon on a rock. The water seeps into the aquifer, saturating the Kangaroo Creek sandstone that overlies the Walloon coal measure below.

The dirty, poor quality brown coal was once mined here, to power the steam hungry sawmills in the early days. It's not so deep here, on the western side of Blue Knob. Shallow enough for Arrow energy to have a frack at anyway.

The prospect of having a CSG wellhead on my land appalls me. I've had two nightmares featuring CSG activities on my land, and I am starting to realise that there is a personal and profoundly psychological impact that the CSG debate has triggered. I am the steward of my property, and with that responsibility I feel complicit if any activity takes place here that does not accord with my vision of stewardship.

The current debate around CSG has focused on water quality. I believe this to be a grave mistake in the campaign against CSG. What we have is a land rights fight on our hands. Property owners must have the right to refuse CSG activities on their land. The water quality debate, although important, must be secondary.

If you doubt this, then ask yourself if water was not an issue, would you want a smelly, ugly wellhead with



mining company staff driving past while you harvest your bananas? Could you abide by the criss-crossing pipelines and the hiss of dirty gas being fed to the carbon-hungry world while you read by 12V solar and try to believe that your eco-lightly footprint is still as small as it was before CSG? No way!

So raise up your voices and arm yourselves with information. Attend the rallies and sign the petitions. Support your neighbours and go see Thomas George. Get active now so you won't be alone when the CSG mob come knocking on your door.

It's vitally important to stand united as a community on this issue. The CSG companies will try to divide and conquer. They have already targeted their TV "hearts and minds" campaign on the mindless masses, the economic engine room and those that respond to an "economy over everything" mindset.

Of course there will be a handful of greedy people that will succumb to the temptation of the royalties promised. Neighbours of these non-community sorts should be ever-vigilant, as they are the likely targets of compulsorily acquired access.

They should also sue their neighbours at any opportunity. That will increase the liability of the companies that make the mess, ensuring their overall economic viability suffers.

I for one will be there at the front line when it comes to direct action. I hope to see all those that care there too.

Stu runs Pooh Solutions compost toilets and consultancy. For more info check out: www.poohsolutions.com or call Stu on 0427-897-496.



Weed of the Month

by Triny Roe

Easter Cassia – Nothing to do with chocolate rabbits, 'Jesus died on the cross for your sins', or the Germanic Spring goddess Eostre. Simply commonly called because this plant, *Senna pendula var glabrata*, displays its bright yellow clusters of flowers at Easter time in Australia. The cassia part of the name stems from it being considered to be in the Cassia genus for over 200 years. In 1982, a large number of Cassia species were reclassified as Senna.

Originating from tropical South America, this naturalised plant, is yet another overgrowing/invasive species. A small shrub to 6m with multiple stems and an upright habit, it can scramble merrily up tall trees using their branches for support. It occurs along the east coast of Australia as far south as Ulladulla. Salt tolerant and drought resistant it is very happy in this country. Though in the legume family, Sennas are not nitrogen fixing as they do not nodulate.

Widely grown as an ornamental, Easter Cassia escaped to colonise roadsides, creek banks and is now considered a serious environmental weed in both NSW and Queensland. Three Sydney Councils have declared it Noxious.

Easter Cassia is often seen growing on the fence lines where the mower doesn't quite reach. And neighbours, unsure of to



Easter Cassia commonly called because this plant, *Senna pendula var glabrata*, displays its bright yellow clusters of flowers at Easter time in Australia.

whom the plant belongs, let go and grow. After all, it's so pretty! It is also known to make itself at home in the under-story of coastal woodlands and forests where it can climb several metres up trees and through the canopy.

In native forest areas this rambling shrub can establish in thickets and will do this fairly quickly if not managed appropriately, particularly on the forest margins. Groves of cassia can also spring up after fire. Regrowth of native tree seedlings, under-story and ground cover plants is inhibited. The dense compound leaves of the canopy effectively blocks the light and prevents other plants from growing.

Another exotic bush found in this region with similar yellow flowers and compound leaves is *S. septemtrionalis*, aka Smooth Senna. Also considered an environmental weed it has 3-5 pairs of leaflets with pointy ends. *S. pendula* has 3 - 8 pairs of leaflets with more rounded ends.

Control of these Sennas can be achieved by hand weeding seedlings when they are small. This is easy after rain when

the soil is moist. Larger specimens can be matted out. The surface roots can extend some metres so try and get all of them. Well established plants may need hauling out with machinery if you want to avoid using herbicides. If left for several years these shrubs can become robust with tough woody trunks.

Before attempting clearance of established specimens you can remove ripe pods for separate disposal in fire or land fill. If you want to keep your garden cassia, consider picking off pods after flowering to reduce seed dispersal. Spread of cassia appears to be mostly via water and soil movement of seed and dumping of garden waste in the bush.

Beware of leaving branches lying on damp ground after clearing. Prunings can survive in the moist environment, sending down roots and pushing up new shoots along their length. As with all weed management, regular follow up is essential. The seed can remain viable for ten years.

There are native alternatives. *Senna acclinis*, Brush Senna, a local subtropical rainforest shrub grows to 3 metres. Due to clearing this plant is considered a threatened species in NSW. It has 5-7 pairs of leaflets in its compound leaves and bright yellow flowers. The seed pods of the native species are flat while the exotics have cylindrical pods.

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NO GRAINS... THE RATIONALE



by Leandra

There are many diets out there that have no grains: The Paleo and Dukan Diets, Mercola's no grain diet, weight loss diets and my own ONE Diet (August 2011 NGT). These diets have commonalities including a high protein, vegetable, nuts, seeds and fruit intake. They have differing ideas on the intake of: dairy, starchy vegetables, sugary fruits, and legumes. Generally these diets are not devoid of fats but moderate intake of good fats are recommended (July 2011 NGT).

Paul Mannon reported that swapping from a Western diet to a diet characterised by lean meats, fruits, vegetables, nuts with no grains, sugars, legumes, dairy led to a 68% reduction in fasting insulin levels and a 70% reduction in insulin sensitivity. In just 10 days the harm from carcinogenic signalling pathways is reduced immediately the diet changed. This is good news particularly for diabetics and those susceptible to development of cancers.

"Grains are high in absorbable carbohydrates which, once digested turn into sugar in the body." (Eddy 2012)

Otto Warburg, PhD, was a scientist and medical doctor and is credited with many important biochemical discoveries leading to him

being awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology in 1931. "The Warburg effect supports that the prime cause of cancer is the replacement of the respiration of oxygen in normal body cells by a fermentation of sugar." Nancy Appleton, PhD, compiled an extensive list of many ways sugar can ruin your health from a vast number of medical journals and other scientific reports:

Grains are typically low in nutrients and can upset the mineral relationships in your body. Grains can cause many problems with GIT, premature aging, yeast infections, gallstones, appendicitis, decrease in insulin sensitivity, interfere with absorption of protein, atherosclerosis, impairing DNA, increases liver size, damage to pancreas, headaches, etc.

Grains are fairly new on the scene. Humans have only consumed grains for a few thousand years, which is less than one percent of the entire time humans have been evolving. Thus grains represent a fad aspect of our current diet.

Grains are not evil in themselves, but their treatment is. They are rendered toxic before ingestion promoting and perpetuating food intolerances and allergies. Bran and germ are often removed from grain flour and baked as quick rise breads so that antinutrients remain; synthetic vitamins and an unabsorbable form of iron added to white flour can cause numerous imbalances; dough conditioners, stabilizers, preservatives and other additives.

Grains cause inflammation. Chronic inflammation is linked to a myriad of degenerative, modern diseases including arthritis, allergies, asthma, cardiovascular disease, bone

loss, emotional imbalance and even cancer.

Gluten intolerance and sensitivity (Coeliac Disease). Often you hear that on grains people experience an almost constant abdominal cramping, gas, bloating, diarrhea and weight gain. Many people today are gluten sensitive or intolerant. For these people eliminating wheat, oats, barley and rye is essential.

If you must!

There are healthy ways to include grains in your diet.

You need to soak overnight and rinse them first to remove anti-nutrients from them. This is the same as for dried beans and legumes. Lentils must be rinsed before cooking. Nuts and seeds can be soaked overnight for those with weak digestion, in order to remove antinutrients.

Phytic acid is found in bran or outer hull of seeds. Untreated phytic acid can combine with calcium, magnesium, copper, iron and especially zinc in the intestinal tract and block absorption. Soaking for a period in warm, acidulated water is part of the sourdough fermentation process in making bread. Such processes neutralize phytic acid and enzyme inhibitors. Vitamin content increases, particularly B vitamins. Tannins, complex sugars, gluten and other difficult-to-digest substances are partially broken down into simpler components that are more readily available for absorption.

Fat-soluble vitamins A and D found in animal fats like butter, lard and cream help us absorb calcium, phosphorus, iron, B vitamins and other vitamins that grains provide. Sourdough whole grain bread with butter or whole cheese is a combination that contributes to optimal health. Organic whole grains soaked overnight and ground into flour with a home grinder in order to make your own sourdough bread and baked goods is the best option. Otherwise buy organic, stone ground, sprouted or sourdough whole grain breads and enjoy them with butter or cheese.

References:

Mannon, P, Cancer and carbohydrates: (re) discovering the link, Metagenics Update, April/May 2012.

Discover Birth & Beyond

by Kirrah Holborn
B. ClinSc (complementary medicine)
Traditional Wisdom

Labyrinths are ancient symbols that have been found on pottery, in basketry, on cave walls and churches. They are a beautiful representation of life journeys, ordeals and transitions.

Labyrinths are very different to mazes. For a start, you can't get 'lost' in a labyrinth. They have one entrance/exit and are one continuous path. You don't need a map and you don't need to think your way through.

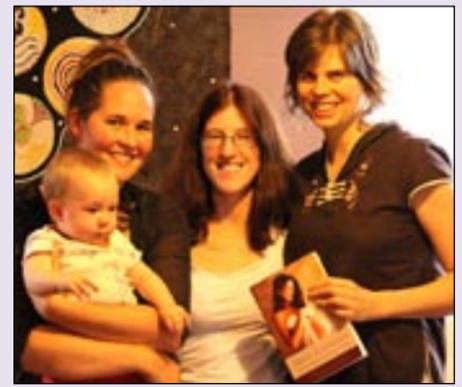
When you enter the labyrinth, all you need to do is remember to breathe and take one step at a time. It slows down your busy mind and allows clarity and insights to surface. The path in to the center allows you to turn inward and answers to questions may become apparent on the journey. As you exit you will have evolved and gained a deeper understanding of yourself and of life.

The labyrinth can also be used as a map for childbirth. A woman's physical and emotional experience of labour is labyrinthine in nature. A woman in labour is unlikely to be remembering what the textbook said about birth. However, she may remember insights gained from walking or tracing a labyrinth.

Within the labyrinth, there is no time-line and no distinct 'stages'. It can be difficult to tell how much further there is to go. Sometimes it feels like the end is near and other times, it seems impossible to go on. Thinking too much can be a trap leading to despair. This is the time to be reminded to keep breathing and take one step at a time. Our bodies birth our babies, not our minds!

During this last month, I have created two special labyrinths. One is made from wood and is about one meter wide. I use it within my birth classes to teach about labour and how natural therapies and different positions can be used to enhance the experience.

I also helped create a walking labyrinth at the "Red Tent Festival" that was held in Mullumbimby in March (see redtentfestival.com).



The 'Birth Journeys' Book Launch at Nimbin Birth & Beyond

This walking meditation helps people to feel peaceful and discover insights. It is an incredible experience to mindfully walk a labyrinth; if you ever get the chance, it's worth doing!

On a very exciting note, the women of Northern NSW are being given more options when it comes to birth choices. A 12-month pilot program has begun that offers free home-birth to women who are 'low-risk' and live within 40 minutes of Tweed, Mullumbimby or Lismore Hospitals. Initially, the program will be accepting two women per month. Hopefully this is a huge success and even more women will be given the opportunity to birth in their own homes. I'll keep you updated as more details become apparent.

Birth & Beyond May Schedule:

4th: Discussion about Birth Choices in the Northern Rivers
11th: Homeopathy for post-partum and children's health with Judith Magee
18th: Learn how to draw a labyrinth
25th: Birth story sharing

Nimbin Birth & Beyond meets every Friday from 10am to 12pm. For more information phone 0429-308-851 or email: kirrah@traditionalwisdom.com.au To be added to the mailing list, just send an email or text.



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A minority of one looks at MardiGrass

by Bob Hopkins

On Saturday, 1st May 1993, Nimbin went through a community empowerment process, a gathering of over 2,000 predominantly local residents who sought to collectively express their opposition to the prevailing drug laws without fear of reprisal. That day has been commemorated each year as the MardiGrass, and things have not been the same since. On that day the balance of power regarding drugs in Nimbin made a seismic shift of enormous proportion.

Prior to that date, alternative Nimbin had gained notoriety as the last conscious utopian settlement of an area in Australia driven by a radical vision of social and environmental justice. Fuelled by the dreamings generated at the 1973 Aquarius Festival the ocker communards dug in and immediately began making impacts on a range of fronts including community land sharing, forest protection, chemical free agriculture and dietary reform, homebuilding and alternative health (including home birthing).

The Far North Coast had been traditionally Country Party heartland, this being Doug Anthony's seat in Federal Parliament. An extreme conservative attitude was the conventional wisdom. The locals didn't take kindly to the hippie immigrants and right from the start there existed something akin to a state of siege on the community.

The authorities, including the police and the local council, actively sided with this old guard. Drugs became a moral high-ground catch cry used to explain and justify the excessive and cavalier policing of that time – pre-Royal Commission on Police Corruption. As well, it served to besmirch the integrity of the whole community. Fear ruled.

Back then, there was not much local pressure to challenge the assumptions this repression was based on, if only for the reason that that made the challenger a target for increased police attention. Accidentally (it seems in hindsight) in 1988 I'd stepped out of the shadows and commenced a public campaign for a repeal of the drug laws. In doing so, I was motivated by two driving reasons in seeking to force the issue onto the local political and social agenda, a process that subsequently led to

that first MardiGrass 19 years ago.

The first and most obvious reason was to deal with the external threat to the "Nimbin alternative community" as posed above. This varied from concerted and systematic raids on communities, including one where 50-odd people were arrested and transported away for charging in cattle trucks during a 1976 pre-dawn raid at Tunttable Falls (that incidentally yielded little in the way of cannabis seized), to the random individual illegal police searches, house entry, or just plain harassment against those who demonstrated some degree of "hippie uppitness".

The second was what I perceived as an internal threat, that being from the temptations brought about by the black market in cannabis. Following the break-up of what was then the main source of cannabis in Australia, the Griffith area growers, prices soared and what was once an item of shared communion became a source of individual power and the cause for separation among the previously cohesive communards.

Nimbin became a "south of the border" market town to Joh Bjelke-Petersen's Queensland. Locally this manifested itself in greed, desire, theft, rip-offs, short term gains: all the usual suspects. Plus it became an attractive trading ground for those outsiders either of a callous bent or whose lives were rendered chaotic by other drug compulsions and who had nothing to lose by being out there hustling pot in the Village.

The obvious approach seemed the removal of the root cause of the repression – the drug laws which were discriminatory, counter productive, dislocating and which created confusion, fear and complications that resulted in those most disadvantaged becoming the scapegoats rather than receiving the help that they obviously needed. But what was missing was a strategy for change that dealt with the down side and simultaneously empowered the local community.

Like everywhere, we are immersed in a world characterised by an all-pervasive global capitalism. The free market system, with all its attendant vices, had been enthusiastically practised by the international drug culture and in Nimbin it was no different. The very heart of the system – production and supply of cannabis to make profit, which then propels growth – excludes the possibility

of capitalism being anything other than a system that has social dislocation and environmental destruction as a by-product.

Just because simple possession of cannabis should not be a crime doesn't justify its sale and promotion. In Nimbin, dealing is the proverbial elephant in the room. Because the trade is characterised by a denial of any negative side to drug use and the thrill of opposing authority, we ignore the fact that this trade is based on a falsely inflated black market pricing arrangement which is at the expense of those held in the substance's thrall; that this cash trade returns no benefits by way of taxes or imposts to the community for development or aid towards the provision of essential services; and that being outside the aegis of the law, this trade is riddled with violence, inconsideration of others and, in Nimbin's case especially, funds a huge trade in other untried and more dangerous sets of substances. It corrupts each of us by our participation in this trade, no matter to what extent, and our denial of what's happening in our community.

Another consequence is that in constantly living a life where illegality is the norm, any and all illegality can become an infatuation. This is not the ethically driven illegality of the war resisters or environmental activism: this is an unrestrained illegality based on personal acquisition. Ethical imperatives are apt to go by the board and without a touchstone of what is the "community good" anything goes. And so it does.

Back then it seemed to me that Nimbin was the obvious place to formulate and test-drive alternative approaches to overseeing the distribution of illegal substances. Not just getting rid of the prohibition laws and police, and declaring an open slather, but a considered approach that aimed primarily to reduce, or at least rein in, overall substance use; took into account and sought to minimise the negative consequences of substance use; eliminated misinformation that served as advertising and encouraged use, and apportioned the cash flow into community beneficial directions. Sadly it didn't work out that way.

As I alluded to above, that first May Day protest resulted in a shift of power, but power is a delicate balancing act and needs to be used in a responsible, compassionate and balanced way or else it corrupts those wield it. It demands a mature and broad perspective of what can be achieved and is helped in this by there being an overview and a strategy on how it can be best implemented. In Nimbin, the pro-cannabis and dealing related lobbies revelled in the changed circumstances. Respect and concern for the rights of local village residents went by the board, drug-tourism became a major drawcard for visitors and the commercial landscape came to be made up largely of bong shops and sundry imported paraphernalia.

Certainly, possessing those substances that people feel improves your quality of life should not be a criminal act. And after all, society is pretty hypocritical in this respect. Alcohol flows unabated in our community and our homes, and is considered both a fundamental right and a symbol of mateship. The pharmaceutical industry flogs a broad range and volume of mood enhancers. A cornucopia of illegal drugs is just a nod or a phone call away.

Our market-driven economy exalts these merchants and panders to the power that their cash flows generate. At some point we need to challenge these dominant paradigms if we're to inhabit this earth and live so we don't do a disservice to those original Aquarian goals. This should be the core message of MardiGrass, though sadly, getting wasted or making a packet through selling product to the crowds is how many relate to the event.

Nimbin still carries a strong legacy of observance to those dreams of a dignity and integrity deemed necessary to keep both the planetary environment and us afloat. It's there, still, evident in the land sharing, the beauty of the landscape, the local sustainable food initiatives of the Neighbourhood Centre, the renewable power visions of the Rainbow Power boffins, the earth-centred spirituality of Djanbung gardens, the music and the gardens and the workshops, but mostly in the vitality and joy that lies at the heart of the local community.

These things are important and deserve the prominence and sense of local pride now dominated by the drug culture. These are the issues important to vast numbers of potential tourists and should be the centrepiece of a local tourist strategy (if there are to be tourists). Time is running through our fingers – the 40 year anniversary of Aquarius is only a year away – but the courage and vision to hold true and to do justice to our dreams is ours alone. Maybe that means re-evaluating and making Mardi Grass afresh as a community empowerment ritual, over the hills in a rainbow town.

Risk



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

There was a medium-sized tree in Kings Park, Perth, in which my friends and I would play. This was a commodious cypress type of tree with thick layers of branches from the top right down to ground level. We'd climb to the top and throw ourselves over, relaxing into a controlled fall, as each branch would catch us and drop us to the next branch, and so on to the bottom. It was wonderful.

I can still smell in my mind's nostrils the resinous quality of branch and twig and the stickiness that remained on the hands long after we'd gone home. My body also retains the sensation of the

slow supported fall. It is an incredible feeling, this body memory and one that has become something a metaphor for me as I look upon the subject of risk.

Risk is a chosen action where the outcome is unknown. Dropping from the top branch of the tree was an act of faith each time, because though we could do the fall over and over, we never quite knew whether we'd catch the branches in a safe way every time. Maybe we'd drop straight to the ground, maybe we'd be all right. Who could really know?

Allowing ourselves to partake of risk, allowed us to know life exquisitely. The Brazilian mystical author, Paulo Coelho describes it this way, "You have to take risks. We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen."

Too often we tremble at the edge of existence, too scared to choose, too scared to do anything. So we repeat the same tired old formulas over and over, even though the circumstances that gave rise to them years ago are no longer relevant.

I'm thinking of a man who I once saw who would not take a holiday from work even though he was completely worn out, to the degree that he was physically ill. Turned out that when he was a child his father had been injured in a war zone and was largely bedridden until death, and mother wasn't coping. Sometimes she could help; sometimes she just took off. The only child, the boy felt he had to hold it all together. So set the pattern of never allowing himself rest – even long after that difficult childhood, even though his life situation was completely different.

He now lived comfortably, with his own grown up family, and a business that employed lots of other people who could run it well without him always present. Yet he still could not let go of his anxiety, he never rested. His family was exasperated. He'd sent them on holiday regularly each year, but always stayed at home to look after the business. What if something happened when he was not there? It was ironical that he could take risks with his business, but not with this essential thing

of allowing rest. It was killing him.

As time goes on the old patterns of dealing with the world get encrusted like an old car battery that hasn't been cleaned. Gunk just accumulates around the vital connections and we lose our wherewithal to act freshly and decisively. Just the thought of doing something new, to leap into the rich field of unknown possibilities feels constrained by a mounting list of imagined things that can go wrong. What if?

"We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen." Accompanying every act of life is the possibility of annihilation. The spectre of death is always present, a figure that brings all the more shimmer to life.

What if the leap ends in stars? Concussion, magic, entrance into an entranced state, paralysis, crippledness, surprise, wow!, feeling incredibly, vitally alive? What if the leap is beautifully supported all the way to the ground, like the cypress tree of my youth? Who knows! Life is risk. The very nature of life can hand out anything – and does. Plunge into it.

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