

Spices and life as reported at souk Khan el-Khalili, Cairo

The Imbibers Ark

by Thom Culpeper, with images and reporting by Alexa Lee in Cairo

“East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.” So goes the Euro-Imperialist view of the Levant and North Africa. A view still rampant in the West, as the crusader-like demolition of great areas of the East again proceeds.

Sir Richard Burton, the British surveyor and linguist (translator of *The Karma Sutra* and a version of the *One Thousand and One Nights* and also the founder of the Hashish Society, of Paris, Lawrence Durrell (*The Alexandria Quartet*), T.E. Lawrence, spy and author (*The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*) were with their contemporary French poets, such as Arthur Rimbaud and other Arabists, western minds that opened to the Arab cultural genius.

The Semitic peoples, from the Berbers, the sons of *El Maghreb el Aksa* (the western lands of the Moroccans) and the Arab tribes of North Africa, on the Nile-culture across to the Levant and on to the Tigris and the Euphrates have many things in living-cultural common, and one in particular. The souk – that place where the “Arab street” manifests its historical-cultural significance from the Pharaonic to the now.

The souks are universal, the *medina* (towns) of most regions have a souk, some of such fame they are known Arab-wide. Morocco has some of Arabia’s most famed, The Fez souk being renowned. In the west it is the souk of Marrakech that lifts the heart. 900 years of life at the foot of the Atlas Mountains, lying in an oasis of irrigated gardens, the Augural blooms with orange, pomegranate, lemon and date groves dressed with bougainvillea and jacaranda and at times gardens of vegetable, roses, lillies and irises. And through all this kilometres of ancient red mud walls weave a poetry of Arab-living, a terrestrial lace.



Other great souks are to be seen at Damascus, Aleppo, Istanbul and to where we are to be, Cairo.

The souk *Khan el-Khalili* is found in central Cairo in what was once a mausoleum. Alexa Lee, who is there now and will be our guide, is an art pedagogue, teaching at a Cairo institute. She is of NZ via OZ, Bali and the UK origin. Lexy will introduce you to this Aladdin’s trove of resources, the culinary material/spiritual of both for body and soul.

From Alexa:

Khan el Khalili is beautiful and in addition, an all-consuming ambience, a ‘shisha’ smoke filled souk with the unique smell of hundreds of years of trading in herbs, spices and essences. A labyrinth of medieval streets where you may become lost and be found again amid ancient, winding narrow, cobbled walkways.

Your five senses are stimulated to a heightened degree of alertness, attention and energy. Added to the pungent aromas of the plethora of herbs and spices are the many perfumeries selling divine, ‘leopatra’ oils and nostrums in beautifully hand-blown, delicate glass bottles, a ‘must to have’.

Khan el Khalili is a visual feast, rich in colours of all hues, patterned Arab carpets, real and fake papyrus images, together with oil works of historical market scenes, the pyramids, gods and goddesses. Sculptural reproductions of oriental images, belly dancing paraphernalia,



intricately worked brass ware, exquisite lamps, coffee pots, food service plates and dishes, silver and goldsmiths works, worked leather and ‘shisha’ pipes.

Egypt is a boisterous, noisy land and souk Khan el Khalili is populated with buskers performing Arab music on traditional Middle Eastern instruments, ouds, flutes, drums, bells and cymbals, amid the cries of the merchants ‘offering’ their ‘precious’ wares.

You are driven to ‘touch’ so much of the magnificent crafts on offer, but, and above all, if you are one of the culinary delights, the ‘tastes’ of one of the worlds most unique and beautiful souks in the world make this souk a virtual and real feast for both the eyes and this soul.

The centre of eating in Khan el Khalili is the Naguib Mahfouz cafe, named for the first Arab writer to win a ‘Nobel’ prize for literature. The oriental and arabesque

decor together with memorabilia celebrating the great writer is an experience and atmosphere that is not to be missed. Offered are Arab dishes such as Chicken Kasbariya, Mossaka, Camuniyya, Fattoush followed by desserts such as Um Ali together with mint or lemon verbena teas or sweet ‘musk’ flavoured coffee as may be offered.

But my favourite place to rest is in El Fishawrys cafe, under cover on a narrow walkway surrounded by heavy timbered walls and furniture dressed with brightly coloured, woven cushion covers worked with intricate Arab designs.

One withdraws from the heat and observes the passing parade on the ‘Arab street’ smiling. Some ‘away’ with ‘shisha’, others drinking mint, kakade (rosella) or lemon verbena teas and sweet Turkish coffee. A special treat? Zanjabil, one of Egypt’s precious secrets. A hot, spiced ginger drink that the Quran

says is “a promise of paradise”... a perfect tonic to relieve the palate of the dry dusty air of Cairo’s rain-free geography or to wash down the spicy foods of this corner of the Orient.

During the fasting month of Ramadan, the souk is populated by the resident Arabs, being too hot for tourists (40+C days), sad for the merchants but a haven for me, to enjoy in peace the souk’s Arab authenticity and its beauty that is incomparable to most places of human meeting on Earth.

An evening in Arabia, a Diffa... an authentic Cairo feast on the theme ‘A Night on the Nile’ is being planned by Terra restaurant at Nimbin Bowlo – one of your Thousand and One Nights, with Arabic dress, music and belly dancing. Keep a look out for it and book early, it will be a night to remember.

“Assalema-a-alaykom” (Peace be unto you)

Blue Knob Farmers, Fibres & Fermenters have a new co-ordinator

As the solstice echoed through the heavens, the Blue Knob Farmers Market reached the ripe old age of six.

In celebration of its maturity the BKFM stallholders voted in Marie Cameron as market co-ordinator and have tasked her to guide it to new levels.

“I am honored to take on the BKFM baton and to give my all to this fantastic community market,” Marie said.

“I started my market experience in the 90’s in the Northern Territory. I worked for the famous Mindil Beach Sunset Market. During the dry season and on a weekly basis I would place up to 160 arts and craft stalls from around the world and I established the Mindil Beach Sunday Market. I progressed into complete market management by taking on a nearby market that was in decline, the Nightcliff Market.

I was able to take the Nightcliff to its full potential by establishing the market place as a stage for local culture, food, music, performance

artists and activists. I introduced organic foods and I co-ordinated the first NT Hemp Expo to take place within its structure.

In my spare time, I co-ordinated multiple Northern Territory events including the NT Health and Healing Expo.

In more recent years I’ve developed as a promoter, publicist, radio and print journalist, photographer and planet activist.

Today, many know me for the camera in my hand and my deep passion for all things BKFM”.

When the stallholders and BKFM customers blew out the six candles the doors opened and the market embraced its full name: ‘The Blue Knob Farmers Market: Farmers, Fibre and Fermenters’.

Already the market has established itself as a home for fresh produce, bespoke fibre artistry and local fermented foods.

The market is building on this reputation; it is blending the three aspects into one to create its new look weekly market with farmers,



fibre and fermenters selling side by side.

Fibre artist Hellena Post has started practising her craft in the market and wants fellow spinners, weavers and bespoke designers to join her.

Fermenting foodies are being called to open a stall: we want your food and your fermenting conversations.



Space is ready and available for new local growers to sell their fresh seasonal produce.

Thanks to Eric Smith the markets’ Backyarders Table is ready to sell those small amounts of overflow produce from your garden. As an embroidery artist, Eric stitches and sells produce all at the same time.

To talk over your ideas, please call Marie on 0448-685-925.

Tomoko Nishi (at left) leads a class making traditional Japanese Miso

The next time you’re at the market say hello to Tomoko Nishi. Tomo makes traditional Japanese Miso and sells it along with her local produce. Tomo runs miso and shoyu making workshops in Mt Burrell, so be sure to talk to her about her teaching schedule.

Wicca

by Louise Mehta

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of being part of a Wiccan Ceremony at the opening moments of a glamorous 50th birthday party. Wicca is the pagan word for witch, and witchcraft has been described as European shamanism. Shamans do healing and magic for their tribes; they have lots of knowledge of the natural world and know how to harness power.

Until recently, my five-year-old daughter believed that witches were evil, scary and ugly – that's how the classic Western fairytales portrayed them. I can thank the Church for that. Since then, I've searched out books and DVDs on good witches (luckily in this day and age, they are easy to find). I tell her I am a good witch. And that She is a good witch by her being a kind and caring person, making beautiful wishes and healing potions. I also taught her the first rule of witchcraft... what you do comes back to you threefold. Stick to being positive and then three times the amount of luck will follow.

Previous to this occasion, I'd only done spells on my own and they were very simple affairs: Go into the moonlight outside, cast an imaginary circle around me with my finger, bow to all the directions in turn, get down on both knees (humble) and emotionally ask for something. Sit with it for a minute, thank the directions in turn and leave. When I feel restless, upset or need help making a decision... I go straight into the garden, make a spell and ask for guidance. Clarity on the subject always comes to me within a few days.

This group ceremony was powerfully dramatic. We, the five priestesses walked clockwise (to increase energy) into a clearing in the centre of the party and made a complete circle. We blessed the energy inside the circle (to be sacred and safe). We were barefoot so the Earth's current could go easily into our bodies and sang a song together about the elements and the cycle of life. Our High Priestess stood in the centre of the circle and welcomed the elements to her in turn: earth, air, water, fire and spirit. As we each gave our offerings to her, we danced (clockwise) around the circle, and conjured up the essence of our element. Dancing intensifies energy.

The Earth Priestess (facing north) wore green and brown. She brought crystals and she beat her drum, the heartbeat. Earth also represents the power to stay strong and make wise decisions in life. She dug her feet into the earth around the circle as she danced. The Air Priestess (facing east) wore silver, a white feathered headdress and brought lit incense to purify the air and release medicinal perfumed herbs for everyone to breathe in. The air represents fresh, pure new energy and lightheartedness. She danced on her tiptoes and whirled around like a bird flying in the wind. The Water Priestess (facing west) wore a flowing gown of different shades of blue and brought a jug of rainwater. Water represents the power of the universe flowing into your cup (body) and through you... out into the world. She glided and flowed with expansive movements like a big river. The Fire Priestess (facing south) wore gutsy reds and oranges and brought a candle, lit for us all to focus on the light



and burn up what no longer serves us. Fire also represents the physical actions needed to achieve your goals. (You have to show the Universe that you are making an effort towards your goal before it will give you what you want.) She danced wildly. The Spirit Priestess (who was also our High Priestess in the centre of our circle) wore mystical purple and black. She brought a metal bowl to mix all the other elements in.

Spirit is the alchemy that brings the elements together and makes the magic appear. She put the crystals into her bowl, wafted the incense around them, poured the rainwater in it and passed the flame around the bowl. She danced mysteriously. Then she recited our spell. (It can be anything you like. It works well if the spell is very specific about what you want; then the universal forces have more information to work with.) Our spell was posh... it rhymed. It talked of the birthday party being magical, of us all becoming one (being aware of everyone), of us being



happy and making positive energy. All the priestesses repeated the last line of the spell together, then everyone at the gathering repeated the last line of the spell again with us and we all raised our arms skywards to whoosh the spell into the atmosphere. "We rise and shine..." It's time to let our personal magic shine on the world stage.

The magical potion made under the new moon was then shared among us element reps into little glass cups and we anointed everyone at the gathering saying, "May you be blessed" on each forehead. After the spell, sacred circles need to be ceremoniously closed to "ground" the energy and thank each of the elements for their presence in turn, saying, "We release you from the circle with love." We left the circle anti-clockwise to release the energy out into the world. I was brimming with energy after the ceremony. We could feel the magic between us and felt very connected to one another. Its no wonder that the collective energy we raised, has smoothly and easily launched me into directions I've been

yearning for. Hopefully everyone else there, has had the same positive results. Many people at the gathering said the ceremony felt very powerful.

Ceremonies carry lots of power because the energy is directed and channelled. I was so impressed by the energy we created, I'm very excited to do more ceremonies with others and lap up the benefits. As lovers of life, let's do more public ceremonies to counterbalance the ceremonies still conducted by the Church to take power from the masses. The Church has always tried to squash paganism because it gives everyday folk personal power. The Church killed as many pagans as they could and brainwashed future generations into believing they owe everything in life to an outside source. Their business has collected billions of dollars around the world and their priests swear allegiance to the Church and to protecting all her secrets to power.

Well, I pledge allegiance to respecting nature, being compassionate and accepting karma. By honouring the powers of nature that give us everything we need, we receive wisdom and smooth passage through life. If we are humble to that which serves us: the gardens that grow our food, the air we breathe, rainwater we drink, the oceans and rivers that cool and cleanse us, our fires and the sun that keeps us warm and vibrant, the animals, the trees, our friends and other kind humans around the world... we receive great

personal power. If we are aware of our actions and their effects, are able to read our own thoughts – and their tone – and choose our words with care, we receive great personal power.

Any obstacles in our way are lessons we need to go through, to grow and become a more fully rounded human. If we accept this fact with grace, we receive great wisdom. All the answers and power are within us! The old religions around the world have always known this. The world is becoming aware of its collective power to stand up to establishments that want power over the masses. No longer are we willing to be pushed around and exploited for our money, time and ignorance. The internet has given a lot more genuine information to the general public. We are informed, wise, happy and ready to help each other. Kindness, sacredness and raising our personal power are the keys to the future if we are to survive and thrive.

Also try doing a ceremony in your garden tonight and see what happens. Blessed be.

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How you are helping weed seed dispersal

Weed Words
with Triny Roe

Living in the Northern Rivers? Hope you like gardening. Plenty of rain in the Rainbow Region. It's not so cold here and the soil is rich and fertile. Everything grows bigger and faster than anywhere else, including the plants we call weeds, naturalised pest species with enhanced vigour and a propensity to multiply readily and spread easily.

Anemochory, hydrochory, and zoochory are the technical terms for seed dispersal by, respectively, wind, water and animals. Epizoochory is the accidental dispersal of seeds by animals. This occurs when seeds have burrs, hooks or barbs which stick to animal fur. Mammalochory is the spreading of seeds by mammals, which includes humans. People are often directly responsible for introducing weeds to new environments, sometimes inadvertently.

It is easy to pick up seeds on your clothing. Bushwalking or simply walking along local roadsides (if the council hasn't drenched them with glyphosate), can be opportunities to collect seeds on your socks or trousers. Sometimes you can pick them up walking through an overgrown suburban garden.

What happens when you get home, to your destination, or even on the way there? You notice the hitchhikers, pluck them off your clothing and, with an unconscious reflex action, simply toss them out the window, off the deck or drop them on the ground. Congratulations! You have just become



Bidens pilosa

a mammalochorist and introduced a new species to the area.

Farmers' friends, *Bidens pilosa*, or cobbler's pegs if you hail from Queensland, are common in the Northern Rivers. Most people would recognise it, even if they don't know what it is called. Originally from tropical America, it is listed in the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD 2010) and now it's found just about everywhere around the world.

Its evolutionary advantage for long distance travel is a small black needle like seed with a prong on the end. These barbed seeds cling tenaciously to clothing, wool or fur allowing them to be carried far and wide eventually establishing in new geographic locations.

Farmers' friends generally germinate on top of the soil or in the first centimetre. Viable for many years stored deeper in the soil, after disturbance such as clearing, ploughing or roadworks there will be a solid flush

of germination. Growing thickly *B. pilosa* can reduce crop yields, interfere with bush regeneration or just be a nuisance to walk through with its numerous scratchy, sticky seeds.

B. pilosa, classified by Carl Linnaeus in 1753, has a history of use in herbal medicine. Recent phytochemical analysis identified several biologically active compounds such as flavonoids which are anti-inflammatory agents and other constituents with anti-microbial properties. Further studies discovered compounds with anti-malarial, anti-tumour and blood-pressure reducing properties. And you can eat it!

Another roadside weed in the Nimbin Valley is *Desmodium uncinatum*, silver leaf desmodium.

Also called velcro vine, its sticky seeds with hooked hairs attach firmly to your clothing if you brush by the twining stems. Introduced as a perennial pasture legume for stock feed, it wasn't long before it left the paddock. This robust vine can form thick mats, putting down roots at stem nodes and interfere with bush regeneration. While it can't climb trees it can and will smother shrubs particularly on rainforest margins.

D. uncinatum also has medicinal qualities. *Hawaiian Herbs of Medicinal Value*, published in 1922, records dried crushed leaves of *Kikania* were smoked as a treatment for asthma. Mixed with other herbs, it was used a wash for scrofulous sores and boils.

Easily recognised by the distinctive silver stripe on its leaves, new occurrences can be easily identified and managed appropriately.

Happy weeding.

Use of the word "sustainable"

by Geoff Dawe

We have forgotten that this plane of existence is set up to provision humans perfectly; not just humans but every other species. Everything has been provided. We needed only sit among it with our mouths agape at the miracle of all that surrounded us. With a well-developed cerebral cortex that enabled an amazing technological facility, humans chose to perfect nature. But that which is perfect cannot be perfected. Technocratic humans made a mess.

Repair of the Earth is not an attempt to make it better, but put it back the way it was. To do that it is necessary to merge with nature and where the cut-off line is between merging and another attempt to perfect, requires major discussion.

At the present moment, many manufacturers sell items with the claim they are environmentally friendly. Every item made in a factory can be shown to have an environmental journey or be "sustainable". Manufacturers understandably can't wait to point it out.

As an example, the items on the table I am writing on, chosen at random, can each be shown to have an environmental journey in the following way: White out – aids better communication and maximising communication; is extremely important in organising for sustainability. Furthermore, a white-out word can be written over, thus saving paper and trees.

Tin jar lid: because the lid is made of metal, if it is kept inside a dwelling and kept dry, it has greater permanency than say a plastic one that will



Tin lid (above), plastic bottle & lid (below)



eventually disappear from light making it brittle. Plastic lids give off toxic gases into a jar as the lid slowly breaks down. Tin lids are also a primary part of food storage. This aids household food growing and release from commercial mostly unsustainable agriculture.

Plastic jar lid: these are made with the comparatively cheap resource of oil. Because oil is highly sought, economies of scale in manufacturing items for the mining of oil, make plastic lids comparatively cheap. Because they are

cheap it is easier to provision oneself with jars in which to preserve the dried, spiced tomatoes one has grown in one's backyard to free oneself from dependence on commercial agriculture.

Assorted videos: provide distraction from reality of one's own existence, at home rather than costing the environment in driving to a theatre to do it.

Any manufacturer can rack his brains as to why his item is "sustainable", but given the items are all the results of technology that sees the world as imperfect, none of them ultimately are. They are all intrinsically unsustainable.

Although one could conjecture if Adam and Eve simply played in the garden and ate the fruit as it fell on the ground, slept warm because they understood naturally what is now the yogic practice of *g Tummo* or production of internal body heat, and didn't get rained on at night because they both had no doubt that they would sleep dry, then one might be able to say they were living lives of sustainability.

However, humans know of no society that has been totally sustainable. In the world of "the fallen"; in the regression from the higher nature to the animal life of the ego, sustainable is a relative term rather than a definitive. One can say that one's manufactured item aids movement toward sustainability in that it does such and such. Or, that one's society or an individual approach sustainability in a certain way. However, one cannot accurately say, except with the above hypothetical or mythical case of an Adam and Eve, that a society or individual or manufactured thing, is sustainable.

Plant of the month

Grey Iron Bark *Eucalyptus siderophlia*



A tree that grows to 30m on slopes and ridges, Grey Iron Bark is an easy to identify eucalyptus due to its grey deeply furrowed bark, and is very common in the Nimbin area, particularly on the drier soils and sands.

This tough tree was described by early commentators as “black and grimy” and as hard as metal, which is where they took the name. There is still a large dead Iron Bark in Mebbin NP which is, or was, the largest of its type in the world. It’s along Lemon Tree fire trail or some name like that, if you have the time.

In seasonally wetter forests, take a look up the southern side of tree trunks to see splendid orchids living in harmony as they attach to the bark of the arching limbs and trunk.

Bee enthusiasts will take delight, as now last month’s A-grade honey provider, the red gum matches together this month with the white sweet nectar of Iron Bark.

To grow your own, it’s easy from seed which will always be found in the gum nuts somewhere in the tree. It’s fairly slow to grow, with growth rates on the farm at home at around a few metres after a few years, but I expect that it will kick along a bit faster one of these days.

Regenerating trees grow a great deal faster, particularly after a cool burn or after an area is slashed or cleared.

Community support for Memorial Gardens



by Paul Le Bars

The Nimbin District Memorial gardens have been spruced up and re-planted as a result of a big community effort to maintain the gardens as a place of remembrance.

A huge thanks to Bunnings Garden Centre, Lismore for their donation of three large bags of soil conditioner, 15 perennial plants and slow release fertiliser.

Also a huge thanks to Gai Reid for the transport of materials, planting and maintenance of the site.

This project is continually supported by the great crew at the Lismore Sub-Branch of the RSL and the Lismore City council. Thanks again to Bunnings for their continuing support.

“Lest We Forget”

paullebars@gmail.com



Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

State Environmental Planning Policy No 44 - Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44) is synonymous with koala conservation in NSW. Its importance in the recovery of koala populations is due to so much of the State’s remaining koala habitat being on private land.

This is of heightened relevance in coastal lowland areas where there is a significant overlap between development pressure and the areas of highest significance for koalas.

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the SEPP’s gazettal and commencement (see Koala Kolumn March 2015). The SEPP had attracted considerable criticism over the years due to the failure of successive governments to respond to calls for its review and updating. Friends of the Koala had been a persistent petitioner. Our most comprehensive but unsuccessful campaign was undertaken during 2010.

Concern about SEPP 44’s numerous and well-acknowledged limitations has intensified over the past 12 months. Significant differences of interpretation regarding the application of some parts have resulted in delay to the finalisation of several comprehensive koala plans of management in preparation by councils. It was for this reason that we successfully moved a motion at the 2015 Nature Conservation Council of NSW Annual Conference which urged the Government to undertake a comprehensive review and update of the SEPP as a matter of urgency.

To its credit, the Department of Planning and Environment has announced it is reviewing a range of SEPPs, including SEPP 44, “to modernise, simplify and improve the effectiveness and usability of the policies”.

While somewhat apprehensive as to what may result, Government agencies and Councils which are active practitioners in relation to the SEPP have already been invited to submit their thoughts on issues requiring consideration. This invitation has been recently extended to community stakeholders, including Friends of the Koala. Once the initial feedback has been gathered and the review undertaken preparation of an Explanation of Intended Effect will be put on exhibition. So, watch this space.

Switching to another matter entirely and that is dogs and koalas, but not the usual dogs versus koalas. Just a few weeks ago, Lismore City Council received its first wildlife detection dog registration. The dog, whose name is Jet is an English Springer Spaniel trained to detect koalas, feral cats and foxes.

Wildlife detection or conservation dogs have been around for a quite a long while but their use to detect koalas, a notoriously cryptic species and often occurring in low densities, has been relatively recent.

We need to know where koalas are for all sorts of reasons – protecting habitat obviously but also to ensure they are not harmed in approved vegetation clearance and logging operations or hazard reduction burns. We’d also like to track down survivors of wildfires, vehicle strikes and severe storm events, not to mention reuniting joeys that have been separated from their mothers.

No matter how experienced a koala-spotter you are, it can be difficult to see koalas with the human eye. Scat surveys are more effective but time-consuming and expensive. Dogs of



After nearly three months in care, Dot has gone home to Reserve Creek, clear of chlamydia, and her pouch-young is doing really well. Notice the span of her hind paws

course have a very keen sense of smell and can be trained to locate scats. Koala sniffer dogs are emerging as the new frontier in koala protection – a highly effective, affordable and non-invasive method for surveying koala presence.

My first acquaintance with a dog trained to sniff out koalas was in April 2014. Maya, a Border Collie cross, accompanied her handler, Queensland ecologist Dr Romane Cristescu, to a strategy and campaign workshop of the emerging National Koala Alliance.

About six months later Friends of the Koala was approached by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage’s North East Region Threatened Species Unit to assist dog behaviourist and trainer, Steve Austin in

training a couple of his detection Spaniels to sniff out koalas.

We agreed with some trepidation, not really understanding to what we were exposing Sweetie, our permanent koala in care, to. We need never have worried. When the time came she just sat in her carry cage looking slightly bemused in the dogs’ sight while they “learned” her scent.

Those of us who were at the Koala Care Centre during the session were very impressed with the quiet, purposeful routines in which Steve engaged the two dogs. Their koala training continued in the field during the following day and from the photos we saw, the dogs were fast and smart learners.

Koala detection dogs are now being trained in three states, Queensland, NSW and Victoria. Scientific papers have been published and the University of the Sunshine Coast is running a Detection Dogs for Conservation programme. The programme is even starting to earn its keep, having recently won the contract to survey koala presence in Tenterfield Shire’s Cool Country Koala Project. Understandably national accreditation is under discussion.

Lismore’s koala detection dog is working in an environmental consultancy. When you think about it though, it’s not just government agencies and ecological consultants who need koala detection dogs – Friends of the Koala’s work could benefit from one as well.

Until next time, happy koala spotting.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please ring Friends of the Koala’s 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233. For information about koalas, their food trees and how you can assist koala conservation, visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone 6622-1233. You can also follow us on Facebook.

To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat ring the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 131-555.

The Femoral Popliteal Bypass

by Robin Stein,
Healer and homeopath

Last month, I talked about the saga my partner and I had been through, in our attempt to get an accurate diagnosis about why his foot had changed colour and why he was experiencing such enormous pain. He has smoked rollies since he was about 13 years old, and had absolutely no idea anything was wrong until he began to experience excruciating pain in his left leg. His foot swelled and became dusky looking, with red, blue and purple blotches all over it.

The photos on cigarette packets about the dangers of smoking are so graphic that I'm certain nobody takes the slightest scrap of notice. Perhaps we would take more notice if it was made very clear that cigarette smoke destroys oxygen inside the body, and wherever there is a lack of oxygen, there is also cell death. Where oxygen is absent for any length of time, there is massive cell death of an entire limb, which dies and needs to be amputated. Cell death may occur very gradually, long before fingers and toes turn black and need to be removed. A blockage is a gradual problem that may be more likely to cause a stroke.



An arterial ultrasound showed the main artery of my partner's left leg was almost completely blocked with plaque from his thigh to his knee. He was taken into surgery on 23rd May after two attempts to insert a stent failed. A vein was removed from his lower leg and grafted onto the artery to by-pass the damage. The cut runs from his mid-calf, all the way up past his hip. 78 metal staples closed the wound. The staples

bit into his flesh every time he moved and his leg became so swollen, he has to wear a compression stocking. There were four tubes inserted into the wounds for a week to drain them. The staples were supposed to be removed after about 14 days, but we were unable to get an appointment for almost three weeks, at which point the staples were really digging in and were difficult to remove. It will be a long and slow recovery.

If you have children who smoke, please read the article from last month to them, then show them this photo. You may actually need to stop yourself so they can learn how to make the same positive change to their own life. This is not something that happens only to men. The wound nurse who is dressing his wound told us that she had exactly the same operation for a blockage in her leg. She stopped smoking immediately, yet she had to have a stent put into an artery of her heart in a far bigger operation only a year after the surgery on her leg, when pain was the alert for a blockage that was found there as well. This is a serious side-affect from smoking cigarettes that everybody should know.

If you have been a long time smoker like my partner, consider having an arterial ultrasound to determine if you already have plaque in the arteries of your legs. If you do, that plaque can gradually be removed as long as you stop smoking immediately. You will need to do some exercise to raise your heart rate for 10-20 minutes daily. Begin a course of natural Vitamin E. Start with 250 units and build by 250 units weekly to 1000 units after 4 weeks. Also take a teaspoon of Vitamin C powder with Hesperidin daily and take at least 100 micrograms of Vitamin K2 daily because it has been found to break up plaque and return the Calcium to your bones. If you continue this regime, you can clear your arteries completely.

If you are overweight, think about reducing the amount of weight you carry around your belly to also reduce the risk of Diabetes, which has the effect of blocking and destroying arteries. I wish you well and I certainly hope this does not happen to you because it has been an enormous setback in my partner's life. Will you email me if you have had this op, please?

robinstein@gmail.com

I'm excited about the possibilities for you



by David Ward
Life action coach

I'm an expert with regards to myself, and I want to tell you that you're the expert with regards to yourself. All your searching will eventually lead back to you, and I can tell you about some very good tools to assist you in this journey, but it remains up to you whether you use them or not, or whether you find your own tools.

The day I started making progress, the day I started to let go of my substances, was the day I stopped searching for that expert and started trusting in myself. Up until this point, I had enlisted help from people because I thought or hoped that they had the answer, that they could do it for me. This is a concept that could be helpful for therapists to discuss at the first meeting, as it could maybe have saved me some precious time, although I do understand that everything unfolds as it should and I do fully appreciate the part that those concerned played in my journey.

This was the beginning of what I call the endless stream of passing phases, driven by the desperation to find fulfilment, health and peace. It makes perfect sense now: how could anything be of benefit if uncertainty had crept in within a week or two and told

me that this was not going to work, that this was not worth the effort. The methods that eventually did provide the answer did so because they were built on a foundation of trust in myself and had stood the test of time.

This was so powerful that the usual week or two of the passing phase has now stretched out to a period of ten years, that's ten years of progress, not always moving forward, not always having faith, but always picking up where I left off and continuing on the same path. So powerful that all connections to substances were broken with never even a hint of a single craving – this was the strength of the truth for me.

All I want for you is that you get a taste of this exhilaration factor, it's better than any drug. It can be like the quest to conquer Mount Everest, but you get to do it in the comfort and relative safety of your own living space.

All we ever have is the present moment, we have heard that said probably too many times, but what does that mean in relation to addictive substances? The over-reliance on substances can be like a failure to grasp this most important fact of life.

Once we seize on this compensation for our lack of appreciation and understanding, things begin to spiral out of control, stretching like a rubber band until it reaches its limit and we come pinging back to reality, to that present moment, the only place that real progress and enlightenment can occur, hopefully while still relatively physically and mentally intact, although of course we are all re-buildable up to a certain point.

Quite possibly some very familiar things will no longer be part of our lives, like partners, properties etc., just further opportunities for practising acceptance and realising our strengths, making room for new values like the appreciation of a fully functioning healthy body and mind and all the rewards that this brings.

Contact David Ward, Freedom from Addiction and Yoga Coach, on 0447-820-510.

How to plant a mind-bomb

In 1975, a tiny handful of Canadian activists found an old fishing boat, and an economically-challenged boat captain, John C Cormack, and chugged out into the foggy sea to the Mendocino Ridge, to confront a Russian whaling fleet.

On board was journalist and ecologist Bob Hunter, who would go on to lead the fledgling group's future incarnation, Greenpeace; and Paul Watson, founder-to-be of Sea Shepherd. They searched for days in thick fog, growing ever-low on food and fuel. They bickered, and debated turning back. In frustration, it was suggested they consult the *i-ching*.

"I don't believe it," recalled one of the crew, years later, "we were resting this decision on the toss of some coins?"

Bob Hunter threw the coins. The *i-ching* responded: Success.

The boat fell silent but for the thrum of the motor, and the slap of wave-water.

Three more times the little group threw the coins, disbelieving, and all three times they drew the same answer: Success. The decision was made. Instead of turning back to



Permaculture Principles
Anastasia Guise

home, they headed out deeper into the unknown, with this one word ringing in their hearts and minds. And the next morning, they found what they were looking for: the giant ships of the Russian whaling fleet in the fog, slaughtering whales.

The activists had underestimated the technological prowess and cold determination of these commercial whale hunters. They found a pod and exterminated it with speed and accuracy. Calves, mothers and bulls were killed. Once harpooned, a radio tracker was placed on the dead or dying whales and they were

left to float, buoyed by their thick layers of blubber.

This is exactly what the little crew of activists found that day, when they braved the cold sea and the deadly whalers in tiny Zodiacs to attempt to disrupt the hunt. A little calf had been left to float and Paul Watson stepped out of the Zodiac to stand on it, trying to ascertain its length. As its warm blood seeped into the sea, Paul made a decision that would set the course of his life. Members of the crew were filming from the fishing boat, and moments later they swung their cameras around. The Russian whalers had aimed a harpoon at one of the little Zodiacs, and fired a harpoon just feet above their heads, into the whale behind them they were trying to protect.

It was a chaotic play of greed and resistance, of ignorance and reverence, on the ever-moving stage of the sea. Those photographs, the images of the giant Russians and tiny Zodiacs, the heroically-mad activists, and dying whales, elicited such a response that it projected this handful of activists and their cause into worldwide public consciousness.



They'd planted a mind bomb. Permaculture was a mind-bomb: it exploded into the minds and onto the kitchen tables of would-be homesteaders with its images of ecological farms and idyllic societies. The picture of the Earth from space, taken from the Voyager spacecraft as it left the Earth's atmosphere in 1972 was a mind bomb, prompting James Lovelock to formulate the Gaia concept, and Carl Sagan to write that humbling tome "Pale Blue Dot". We use the

phrase "to plant" when we speak of planting an idea, because like a seed, it grows so much beyond its crucible, becoming things we never see or expect in its beginning.

So what is our mind bomb? The Bentley angel? The flotilla of rafts blocking Newcastle's coal port? The dead reef? Our visions have grown wings, and flares of courage and hope are going off everywhere. Our environmental movement has grown up, and the mind bomb has truly exploded.

Why go bitless?

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

My own personal journey with bitless bridles began over ten years ago. Since then I have passed through many and varied learning experiences and perspectives. Now I find I'm returning to a similar place to where I started. Initially I loved the bitless bridle because it meant I could immediately remove the bit from my horses' mouths. I'd been riding in halters for years but didn't feel safe doing that riding alongside the road or at work taking people out riding. So in those situations I used a bit, but was never happy about it. I felt I didn't have a choice if I wanted to be safe and so continued to use the pain based method of bits.

Then one of my riding students was going to buy her first ever bitless bridle. I decided to get one too. Neither of us knew anything about them but luckily we accidentally bought the cross-under style (the side-pull is the same as a halter). This one piece of equipment changed my life. I was busy studying equine science at university, working as a riding instructor and trail guide, and had a herd of horses including a warmblood stallion and his mares to look after at home. Basically I had no time left to train my own horses but I still wanted to ride them for R&R. I literally did no training for the bitless at all (I didn't know how to then anyway) and just popped it on and rode. ALL my horses were wonderful in it and went softer and easier than I'd ever experienced before.

To say I was gobsmacked is to put it mildly, I was astounded. Why

wasn't everyone using these? Pain free and effective, I'd hit the bonanza! But the absolutely amazing part was how easily the horses transitioned into them. Up until this point I'd thought that only people who were not working and had lots of time, or who worked full time as trainers or who had lots of money to pay for instructors and trainers, or were incredibly highly skilled, could possibly ride a horse safely without a bit! This changed everything.

Of course I quickly started raving about them to anyone who'd listen. Most of my students went bitless and I thought it was only a matter of weeks before the world would be bitless. Well, ten years down the track and...

In the meantime, I found myself drawn to the world of natural horsemanship, a group of people who don't want to use bits and who want to be kind to their horses. Over the years I've incorporated many wonderful principles from this training style into my own method. But I've also found that for many people it's just too long a journey to train a horse this way and/or they just don't possess the skills. So many of these people continue riding with bits because they think that unless they can be master horse trainers they have no choice.

This brings me back to the beginning and to what I discovered with my very first bridle. The cross-under bitless bridle can be used by children, novices, fearful riders, intermediate and experienced riders immediately. There is no need for years of intensive training and light-bulb moments of incredible horse



whispering to be able to ride without a bit. You can do it today if you want to remove the bit from your horses' mouth. If you are a beginner it's a good idea to start slowly in a small space while your horse adjusts, and then go for it. For experienced riders who aren't hand dependant, the transition is immediate. And then of course I am happy to come and visit you and your horse and give you a start-up lesson. There's no need to delay, you can do it today.

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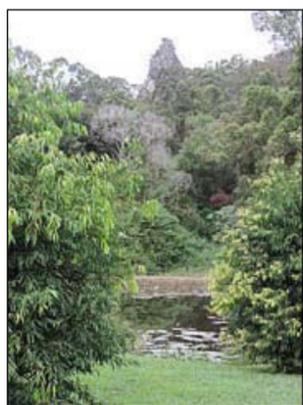
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Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Lorraine Keen

Wet weather saw the last minute cancellation of the planned garden and an alternate venue was arranged at the home of our President Andrew Barton and partner Nick Terakes.

From the moment you drive through the gates of this 130 acre property, you get the feeling that you are in a park.

The long driveway winds through maintained grassland and tall trees up to garden areas that lead to the homestead surrounded by large verandas overlooking the manicured lawns, large dam edged by purple and white waterlilies and extensive orchards loaded with citrus. The many specimen trees have been strategically planted allowing an uninterrupted mountain view.

There are numerous plantings throughout the property where bromeliads, cordylines and palms feature. Wallabies laze and graze while flocks of cockies circle overhead.

At the rear of the property we find the veggie garden, coffee and banana plantings.

An enjoyable afternoon was spent walking around this beautiful property before the AGM commenced. The current committee stood down but were voted unanimously back into their previous positions.

Next meeting is on Saturday 16th July, 2 to 4pm, when we visit the property of Dawn McDonald at 682 Blue Knob Rd, Lillian Rock. All welcome – please bring chair, cup and something to share for afternoon tea.

nimbingardens@gmail.com



www.nimbingoodtimes.com

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Creatively preparing for birth

by Kirrah Holborn
Traditional wisdom

So many insights are gained when we make time and space to connect deeply with ourselves and each other. It's very difficult to know everything about birth but there is a lot people can do to feel well prepared for the journey.

Conscious learning and indirect learning

Practical information about the physiology of birth activates our 'thinking brain'. For many, having a thorough understanding of the physical aspects of labour is important and can help normalise the stages of labour and the whole process.

However, when women are in the midst of birth and experiencing strong sensations, they aren't usually thinking about what their uterine muscles are doing, how dilated they are and what position their baby is in. Instead, they are seeking ways to cope and move with the sensations.

The kind of preparation that really helps with this is indirect and multi-sensory learning. I really encourage self-discovery and deeper understanding. I love providing a balance of practical information and engaging hands-on experience. This is when we truly understand something. Indirect learning can come through being creative.

Creating art to find insight

It's quite common for people to dismiss making art as 'something only artists do'. For many people, the last time they created art was in school and it can seem like a scary prospect to drag out the pastels and paint again. But, oh the benefits are so worth it!

Creating art helps people to connect to their intuition (which is often heightened in pregnancy and birth). It allows people to get in touch with their feelings rather than simply intellectualizing the process. It can be revealing



to listen in to what your art is telling you. It is usually very fun and enjoyable to make art.

Having a blank piece of paper in front of you is representative of all the possibilities that lay ahead. Creating art is a reminder that what image is in our minds may look different to what eventuates (this is similar to how birth plans and expectations organically change). Being creative also slows down our minds and allows us to listen to our feelings and intuition more deeply.

Making art is a great way to create your own story. There are many influences that shape our beliefs about birth (media, society, friends stories etc). By taking time to be creative and think about what birth may be like for you, it allows you to create your own story.

Try it, you might like it

So, this month, I encourage you to buy, or find your supply of pastels or watercolours and make some time to sit down and create. Find a peaceful place and set up your art supplies.

A fun exercise to spur your creativity is to imagine labour as if it were a landscape. What kind of terrain comes to mind? Are

there mountains, rivers or trees? If you were moving through this landscape, who would be with you? What would you see?

Take around 30 minutes to draw or paint everything that comes to mind. Then, take another 10-15 minutes to journal about the process of making your art. How did it make you feel? Did anything surprising come up? Is there anything you'd like to do differently as a result of making your art?

There are so many things you can do to prepare for birth. The earlier people start to prepare the more time they have to dive deep and feel relaxed and confident in their abilities. Making art is a fantastic tool to tune into your creativity and learn more about yourself. Try it and let me know how you go.

Kirrah Holborn provides pregnancy, birth and postpartum support in the Northern Rivers. She facilitates Birthing From Within antenatal classes, gives nurturing pregnancy massages and provides placenta encapsulation services. For the chance to win a pregnancy massage text your name and email to 0429-308-851 or visit: www.traditionalwisdom.com.au

Natural law

by Helene Collard

There are many changes happening for us all, and this last period of time has had its fair share of bumps and turns. We are in a process of integration. Therefore, the bumps, turns and confrontations we've experienced, are there to accelerate and push-through the changes required, to complete the current cycle of transformation. These changes may occur within relationship dynamics, your job, your diet and lifestyle, your home and other areas.

Whilst some things are shifting, even ending, there is definitely a simultaneous occurrence of new things birthing and growing. Such is the cycle of life. Therefore, it's important to be patient and to have perspective. Continue life in a slow, yet steady manner. Rushing things prematurely, will only cause irritation and set you back further.

The first two weeks of July are perfect for immersing yourself in research or a mission of sorts. Is there something you want to explore further? This time is ripe for dedicating yourself – it has the potential to prove pivotal.

The second half of July brings up the theme of 'going with the flow'. Whenever we try to control events that are out of our control, we become frustrated. The main lesson to learn during this time is about letting go and going with the flow.

The 26th of the month marks the Mayan New Year. Therefore, we can see July as an opportunity to tie up loose ends and let go of what doesn't serve us, in preparation for the hope and renewal a new year can bring. In addition, it will be very beneficial to enter a process of purification, sometime during the last weeks of the



*We are all self-governing.
Let us call upon our ancestors and teachers – past and present,
to guide us in the way of the Heart.
You are all my relations.
All is One*

month. This can be done many ways – purify the mind through meditation, purify the body with diet, exercise and high quality water, purify the spirit through prayer and sunshine, purify the emotions by spending time with children. Focus on whatever will benefit you the most.

Yemaya Centre – July program

- **Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th July:** Reiki First Degree Course
- **Wednesday 20th July: Evolve Event** – Guest Speaker, Stress & Trauma Therapist, Sharon Mullun. Topic: 'Finding True Safety through Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE)' Reiki Treatments by appointment. Gift certificates now available. Bookings essential.

Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing, is a Reiki Master and the Founder of the Yemaya Centre for Reiki & Wellbeing in Lismore. She has facilitated a range of personal growth and wellbeing workshops locally since 2008.



Food

by Brigid Beckett

What and how we eat is vitally important in Chinese medicine, expressed well in quotes such as "Experts in medicine are inferior to those who recommend proper diet" from 11th century Zhi Chen, or "he that takes medicine but neglects diet wastes the skills of the physician".

Today we have food choices that previous generations have not. There is choice between healthy and unhealthy (processed), seasonal and non seasonal, contradictory advice and fads, and the choice between ethical and non-ethical production. Also the choice of the amount that is eaten.

Food stagnation is common. It is caused by overeating, or eating large meals late at night, or too much rich or fatty food. Symptoms include discomfort, weight gain, indigestion,



fatigue, feeling heavy and tired. Damp and phlegm accumulate, which can have serious consequences such as heart disease and strokes.

In China, the food has traditionally tended towards light and seasonal, with a greater proportion of carbohydrates, pulse, vegetables, grain, foods that support stomach and spleen and build qi. Richer foods, meat and other protein sources, dairy, sugar, are eaten in smaller amounts. These are high wei foods, needed more in cold climates or in young active growing individuals, but in our society often over eaten.

Fruit and vegetables are cooling and mobilising. Too much fruit affects the function of the stomach and spleen, causing damp. Generally, deficient conditions benefit from warm food, such as the higher protein foods, and longer cooking time gives food a warmer nature. Cooler natured foods can be used in heat conditions.

Balance is needed, and eating foods that are right for each person's condition and constitution. Generally raw food weakens the spleen and too much can cause deficiency and damp. Light cooking, such as stir frying or

steaming, allows vegetables to keep their cool nature without harming digestion.

Small amounts of sweet food benefit digestion, while too much does the opposite, causing damp and phlegm. Sour foods, egg some fruit, tomato, yoghurt, pickles, are good for the liver, but too much is drying. Salty foods are softening, descending, but too much can aggravate dampness and disrupt fluid metabolism. Seafoods often have a salty nature. Pungent foods, such as onion, pepper, cinnamon, mustard, pesto, are good for lungs, spleen and to treat damp and phlegm – they can be eaten in combination with rich foods to aid digestion. Too much is drying.

Bitter foods, such as tea, coffee, oats, rye, treat damp, and in correct amounts benefit digestion. Tea is given great importance in China. It has many benefits, from digestion to benefitting the eyes and mind. Both black and green tea have health benefits. Black tea is warming, green tea tends to be cooling.

Equally important as what to eat, is how to eat. Over-eating has already been mentioned as a source of disease. Regular eating also benefits spleen and stomach. Eating too frequently as in constant snacking is not good, nor is infrequent or skipped meals. Under-eating or dieting damages the spleen, resulting in metabolic problems, tiredness, and deficiencies that

adversely affect the body and mind.

The time of day that meals are eaten also affects digestion. Night is yin, a time for rest and restoration, there is decreased metabolic action. Bigger meals at breakfast and lunch and less in the evening is recommended. When this is not possible, at least try to eat three hours before going to bed. If eating just before bed food may not be digested well through the night, leading to poor appetite in the morning, bloating and chronic indigestion.

In China, as with many older societies, eating is a social glue. Enjoying food is vitally important, especially harmful is obsessing about food or seeing it as an enemy. Eating while rushed or busy is not recommended as energy is being diverted away from digestion. Arguments and conflict at mealtimes will stop the flow of qi that is needed for good digestion.

Dramatic changes to diet are not usually needed or desirable. Eating appropriately for season and constitution, choosing fresh over processed, and having a healthy relationship with food will go a long way towards good health.

Brigid Beckett is a fully qualified and registered acupuncturist working at Lismore Community Acupuncture. Contact Brigid on 0431-702-560.

Yoga, stress and the relaxation response

by Cameron Storey

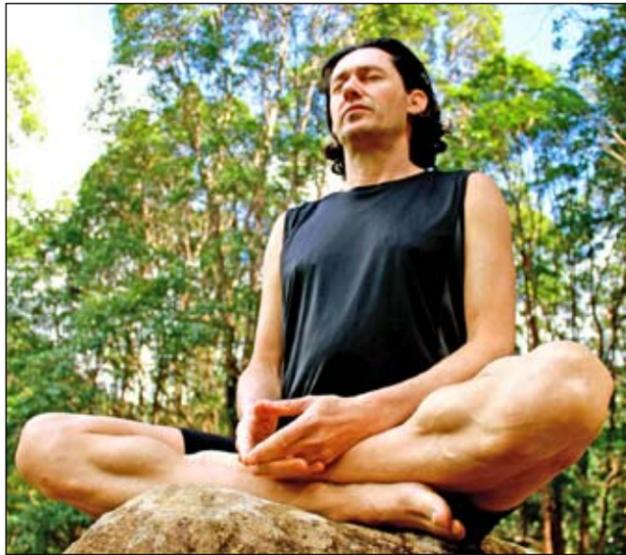
When either the stress response or absence of stress (relaxation response) are perceived/triggered through the eyes or ears information is sent to the hypothalamus, via the amygdala, which then communicates to numerous areas of the body through the autonomic nervous system (ANS).

The ANS has two parts: 1) the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and 2) the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS).

Stress triggers the SNS into possible "fight, flight or freeze" mode while the lack of stress or the relaxation response triggers the PNS into digest, procreate or regenerate mode. During yoga relaxation or meditation, and we are hopefully not digesting or procreating, then we are regenerating the body.

During the stress response the SNS activates the adrenals glands to produce adrenaline and noradrenaline which in turn: relax bronchi of lungs, accelerate heart rate, increase blood pressure, increase blood flow to skeletal muscles, inhibit stomach and pancreatic activity, stimulate glucose release from the liver and decrease saliva production.

With sustained stress a secondary response, via the



hypothalamus the pituitary gland and the adrenal glands (HPA axis), activates cortisol supressing the immune system and decreasing bone formation.

What events can trigger the SNS or stress response? Any danger, like driving near misses or a large dog attacking you, anger, soulless work, resentment, death of a loved one, injury, illness, marriage, divorce, pregnancy, jail, inter-personal conflict, worry, hunger, loneliness, childhood trauma memories, pessimism, helplessness, etc.

Left unchecked the stress response contributes to cardiovascular disease (CVD): high blood pressure, atherosclerosis (risk is directly related to blood pressure according to Dr. Herbert Benson), heart

attack or stroke.

Heart attack and stroke account for around 30% of all deaths of Australians in any one year, around 43,603 people in 2013 or one Australian death every 12 minutes as well as 518,563 hospitalizations in 2013 all of which are largely preventable.

Nine out of ten people have at least one lifestyle risk factor for CVD: high blood pressure, overweight, physical inactivity, low fruit and vegetable intake, alcohol and smoking.

Recent research from the New England Journal of Medicine with 9000 people indicate that keeping blood pressure levels at or below 120 over 90 would save lives. The 50% of adult Australians at risk of CVD,

and usually not showing any disease symptoms, would benefit enormously from relaxation/meditation training.

During the relaxation response the PNS constrict the bronchi of the lungs, decrease heart rate, decrease blood pressure, normalise blood flow, stimulate stomach, pancreatic and gallbladder activity, reduce inflammation and increase saliva production.

What can trigger the PNS or relaxation response? Absence of dangers, calm peaceful environment, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga relaxation (Savasana), slowing the breath especially exhalation, meditation, calming music, some massage or visualisation techniques, prayer, chi gong, tai chi, hugging, etc. These activities trigger the super important regeneration process.

If laboratory tests have proven that patients can lower their blood pressure by "thinking relaxing thoughts" (Dr D. Shapiro, B. Tursky and G.E Schwartz) then why do people not make lifestyle choices that include more relaxation and meditation?

Yoga classes available at Dharma Centre Yoga Space, Lillifield Community, (15 minutes from Nimbin) Facebook 'Dharma Centre - Lillifield' or phone 02 6689-7120.

Feeling secure, adventuring out

by Dr Elizabeth McCardell M. Couns., PhD

When I was a little child, I got fed up with being in my family and thought I'd run away. I scooped up a few essentials and scampered off down the road, without saying goodbye. The further away from the house I got, the less sure about my decision I became, until I got to the point of thinking, "Now what? Where do I go?" After all, where can a kid go, really?

So I went back. Nobody knew that I'd left and nobody questioned me when I returned home; such was the nature of life as a kid in a safe neighbourhood in the 50s. Whatever my own somewhat ambivalent difficulties with my mother were, I still felt safe at home in the family house with her, my brother and father.

Security is a primary human need and so it is that in order to feel secure we form attachments to one another. From this place of security, we find safety and freedom to explore the regions beyond this point.

Attachment is that psychological connectedness that occurs between humans and lasts for a lengthy period of time. The level of this

connectedness generally waxes and wanes and waxes, in a continuous circle of renewal and disintegration and renewal again. It is a thick space, with a richness that holds and releases and welcomes again. This looping is what a group of family therapists around the world call, "the circle of security". The circle of security allows a child, and later grown up, to venture out and explore the world, and return knowing they will be received by those that care for them with trust, respect, and in an attitude of freely given love.

I meet a large range of people in my clinical practice and many of them are explorers of the greater world. Some, though, are very fearful of change, of different environments, and of people. Even coming to see me is felt to be a big risk. A very small number have never left this country town I now call home, and which I moved to seven years ago. This always sort of surprises me. I am a traveler from a family of travelers and enjoy going where I have never been before. I do, however, like to feel some sense of security wherever I am, and with this security comes a sense of being home wherever I am.



Feeling safe is a key for all people. As infants, we reach out to our caregiver (usually our mother, but not always) and other close people and it is their level of sensitivity and responsivity that helps us develop a secure sense within ourselves. It is also in this space that empathy is born. Empathy is like going out to meet another person and walking with them awhile, without ever changing places with them.

Part of the being present with another and sensitively receiving them is the sharing of eye contact. Indeed the sharing of eye contact is one of the identifiers of healthy human development and more generally, a balanced psychology.

Not all can participate in such a sharing. People on the autism disorder spectrum are some who cannot hold

such contact; others are avoidant because of certain learned behaviors dating back to infancy. Current research and therapies are finding ways to shift this pattern to a more fulsome contact. Such therapies introduce the person to incremental exposure to shared eye contact and the results are coming through that indicate there is an improvement in interpersonal relationships and a greater capacity for empathy.

This work is exciting as it shows that the human brain is flexible and conditions that we previously thought could not be changed have some capacity for quite fundamental shifts. Furthermore, this work is suggesting that the principle of feeling secure and adventuring out isn't just what happened in infancy shaping how we are the world, but is in continual negotiation throughout life. This is why psychotherapy works and this is why I work in the field. What we were once isn't necessarily what we are now. We can and do change.

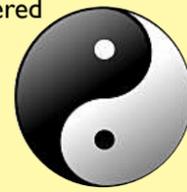
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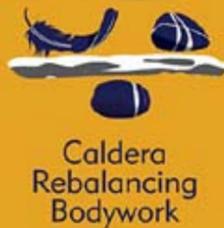


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Tuntable Falls Community School set up a stall to sell the abundance of its garden and orchard at the Nimbin Organic Farmers Market recently. The kids were involved in every stage from harvesting to selling, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The school is planning to hold a stall once a term.



Our lucky parents were indulged by the children at our annual 'Pamper the Family' day. With a combination of massage, facials and delicious food, our families were literally pampered from head to toe by the gorgeous children. A lovely way for them to learn the act of

'giving'. The winter solstice celebration incorporated lanterns, music and a funny play combining circus, mime and a cross-dressing principal! It was topped off with a warming winter feast using more garden produce.

Fashionating!

46 Cullen Street Nimbin

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Term 3 starts at Open Learning Centre

Nimbin Open Learning Centre will begin term three on Wednesday 27th July, running for eight weeks. Enrolments are open on Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st July in the Community Centre classroom, from 10am to 3pm. Classes already confirmed are Exploring Art, Creative Writing and Pelvic Floor Health. If you have a query or would like to offer a class, call 6689-1477 or find us on facebook as *nimbinopenlearning*.



Pelvic floor health

by Betti Wille

Nimbin Open Learning will hold another class in Pelvic Floor Health on Thursday mornings during the next term. It's for women only.

This class is not just about pelvic floor anatomy and how to contract the relevant muscles. We do a lot of conscious breathing, body-awareness exercises and relaxation, too. This next class will also include some sounding.

The pelvic floor is the base of our body. Its composition influences our posture, pelvic organ functioning, breathing, grounding, presence, resonance, sexuality and relationship towards our selves.

With awareness and exercise we are able to change the composition of our female base towards a richer and healthier experience.

Join me on Thursday mornings 10am - 11.30am at the Community School, Nimbin Community Centre, Cullen Street.

Enrol on 20th and 21st July at the Community Centre classroom, or phone 6689-1477.

Women who were in previous classes are welcome to join us for sessions, just pick the ones a bit further down the track, and pay \$10 towards Nimbin Open Learning funds each time. Thanks to Christine and Judy for organising these affordable classes for the community (\$55 for the whole term)!

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Members of the popular Ukelele class last year. It has not yet been confirmed for Term 3, but enquire if interested.

Nimbin Holiday Club winter program

We are operating from the Nimbin Community School, 81 Cullen Street, and on excursion days please meet us in the Nimbin Central School carpark at 9am.

The day runs between 9am and 3pm, for children aged 5 - 12. Please read the dates and venues below carefully and book to avoid disappointment. To book phone NNIC on 6689-1692

(between 10am and 4pm) or call/text Kylie on 0487-576-281.

Please note that the basic fee is \$12 per day and more on excursion days.

Parents must sign consent forms for excursions, and ensure children wear appropriate clothing, covered shoes, brings a hat, and have adequate food and drinks for the day.

Date	Program	Cost
Monday 11th July	Nimbin Community School and Park Art/Craft, DVDs, Games, Music and more. We will be knitting, making pompoms and having fun with wool. Getting warm with wool	\$12
Tuesday 12th July	Excursion - Lismore Cinema - Finding Dory (PG) We will be going to the movies to watch <i>Finding Dory</i> (PG) and then visiting some of the parks in Lismore. (Please book to avoid disappointment as places are limited)	\$25
Wednesday 13th July	Nimbin Community School and Park Art/Craft, DVDs, Games, Music and more. We will be making treasure, maps, hats and balloon pirate swords. Pirate Day	\$12
Thursday 14th July	Nimbin Community School and Park Art/Craft, DVDs, Games, Music and more. Karaoke and dance party	\$12

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Year 6 goes to Canberra and the snow

by Kirrily Owen
P&C President

After counting the sleeps for weeks, the Coffee Camp Public School Year 6 class are finally on their 5-day excursion to Canberra.

The week will be packed with visits to the National Exhibition, National Museum, Embassies, Black Mountain Tower, War Memorial and CSIRO discovery. They will get to see the Government in action by attending Question Time after their tour of Parliament House.

Of course, they couldn't go all that way and not play in

the snow, so the Wednesday was all about snowballs, sledding and building snow figures!

A visit to Questacon was the final bang in what is sure to be one of the highlights of their primary years.

By combining with other small schools, Coffee Camp Public School was able to make the cost of the trip possible for Year 6. The students also did a great job organising cake stalls to supplement the cost.

We can't wait to see all the photos, hear the stories and welcome them back from this highlight of their final year.



Thanks to Principal Jane Varcoe for making this happen. I'm sure the Year 5

students are ready to start counting sleeps until it's their turn.

Rainbow Region homeschoolers

by Susan de Wall

Did you know the Rainbow Region has a growing body of active and supportive home educators? In fact, we have several meet-ups and activity sessions each week for children and teens who are being educated at home.

Kids and their families have been connecting this way in our region for many years, but recently there has been a large increase in numbers of home educators in our area. This is a trend reflected all over Australia and worldwide.

The reasons people give for choosing home education are as varied as the families themselves but one thing is certain – most people say that home education turned out to be the best choice they made for their children and for their families too.

One of the barriers to home education most commonly reported is that families don't know where to start. We are fortunate to have many experienced home educating families in our region who are willing to provide support to those new to the game and to answer the many questions of those considering home education for their child.

I have found that once folks get in contact with others who are already doing it, once they see homeschooling



Meeting in the park – Joella Jones

in action, the barriers fall away and it becomes clear that this is an excellent option for many children. To help those new to the journey, some of us will be running information sessions in the coming months – watch for details.

Home education can start at any age. It can be done on a flexible schedule, and can be designed to fit your family's philosophy and lifestyle as well as your child's individual needs. It is legal in every state of Australia and parents need no special qualifications. Additional payments are available for children with

special needs to assist with the cost of home education but most of us find that home education is not very costly.

Home education is on the increase in Australia and worldwide as people recognise the need to nurture a lifelong love of learning, to create an education unique to your child's needs and allow them to fully explore their talents and passions.

If you'd like to know more, please contact me at: rainbowregionhomeschoolers@gmail.com

Kids learning about death

by Natasha Livock

Death. It came to Cawongla Playhouse recently, in the form of one of our white-headed pigeons, found lifeless near the road at our front gate.

I thought of the number of times I'd arrived to see that very pigeon sitting radiant in the sun on the overhead wires. He was the male in our couple who had built a large stick nest in our jaboticaba tree. Natasha and the children identified it was him through his feathers – the glossy green sheen that only the males have.

"How well do we, as educators, do death?" was a question posed by Claire Warden at the recent Nature Pedagogy course I attended near Sydney. "What of the blood and gore?" There was little blood on this pigeon – just a small area of injury where feathers were missing,



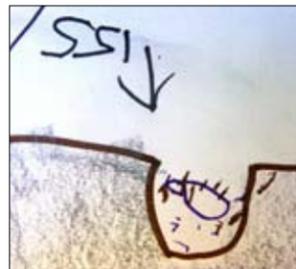
probably from hitting a car. We didn't have to face gore – I wondered how each of us would have reacted if we'd had to?

All the children wanted to hold the pigeon, many a second time, respectfully supporting its head and body as they passed it around our talking and thinking circle. "What is death?" Natasha asked. "What do we do with death, and what happens after we die?"

"Do you think it's going to come alive again?" Carter

asked. "We should look after it." The children discussed burial or burning versus leaving it as roadkill for another animal to profit by or potentially die from, if also hit by a car. Emotions were expressed. "I'm sad about that," Jack said. Opinions and ideas flowed. Later, in the privacy of home, so did tears, we were to find out.

We opted for burial, in our garden, surrounded by life. Our philosophy at Cawongla Playhouse is strong – we



Left: The children bury the white-headed pigeon on a bed of soft pine needles and flowers.

Above: Lssi's cross-section drawing of the pigeon in its grave

care for all things at our little preschool. The huntsman spider, the burrowing frog, the lifeless bird – like us, they all belong here.

We welcome the children back for Term 3 on Wednesday 20th July. For more information on Cawongla Playhouse, call us on 6633-7167 or feel free to visit next term. We are open Tuesday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm.

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