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DIRECTED BY KIRK PAGE

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The Nature of Things and Artist's Choice



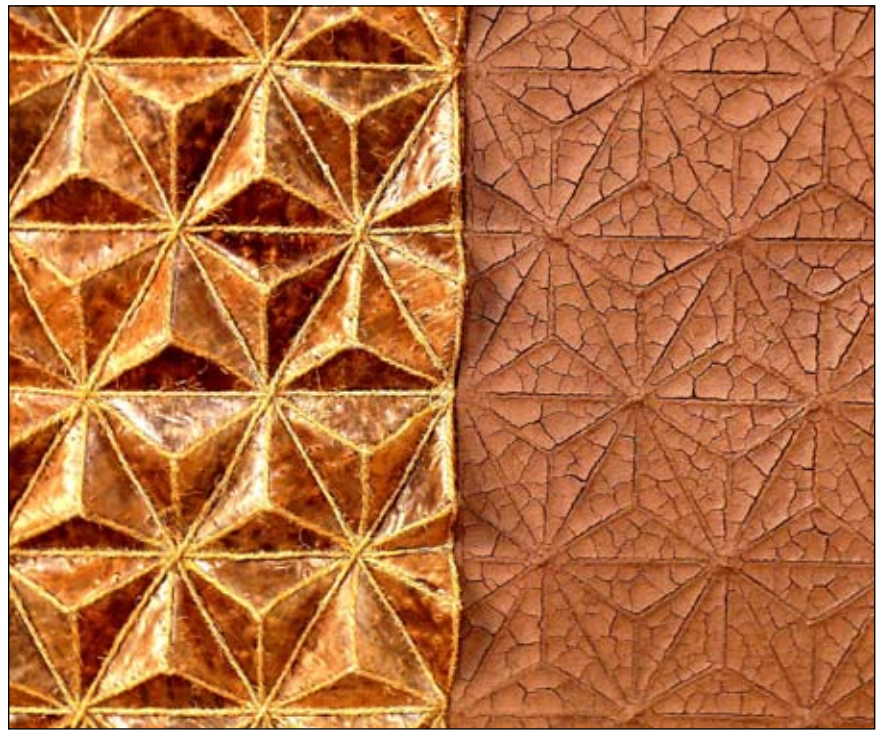
'Air BnB' by George Giannotis

The current exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is called 'The Nature of Things'. Going by the comments of visitors to the Gallery, this is one of the best yet.

Along with the potters and students from Blue Knob Ceramic Studio making their foray into the world of exhibiting and selling work, artists have once again come to the fore around the theme with paintings, ceramics, basketry and fibre.

Lae Oldmeadow's 'From Where I Came' is an outstanding piece and the 'Wheelie Walker' installation by Lynda Clark and George Giannotis's 'Air BnB' add whimsy and fun to the show.

There is something for everyone in this exhibition, which runs until Saturday 18th November.



'From where I came' (detail) by Lae Oldmeadow

The last exhibition for the year is called 'The Artist's Choice' and will opened on Friday 24th November at 6.30pm. The Vocal Minority choir will perform on the night and dinner is available for \$20 which includes main meal and dessert, booking is essential if you want to have a meal.

Contact the Gallery on 6689-7449 or email: bkhgallery@barbourisp.net.au Blue Knob Cafe continues to run on a volunteer basis with Paul Scott managing the cafe. The volunteers in

the cafe have been doing a fantastic job, learning new skills and getting up to speed with the growing number of visitors who are enjoying the all-day breakfasts and the atmosphere of the Cafe, Gallery, Ceramic Studio and the Blue Knob Farmers Market on a Saturday morning.

Artists & Friends Lunch

The next Artists and Friends Lunch will be held on Thursday 30th November at 12.30pm.

A TASTE OF ART

a taste of art

blueknob hall gallery

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Blue Knob Cafe

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Gallery celebrates 20th anniversary



Nimbin poster prints and cards by Amanda Bragg
Right: Donna Sharam has a new range of boxed coffee cups

by Karen Welsh

The Nimbin Artist's Gallery first opened its doors Friday 7th November 1997, and has become a vital 'cog in the wheel' for our local art community.

Many years later, always staffed by artists and volunteers, we are still here and thriving.

To help celebrate our 'Anniversary Month', the Gallery is offering a \$50 gift voucher.

Tickets will be available during

November to Nimbin locals when they call into the Gallery. The lucky ticket will be drawn at the end of November, and the winner will be notified and announced in the December NGT.

With gift-giving season just around the corner, the Gallery has had some new additions recently – the Amanda Bragg Nimbin poster prints and cards arrived last week, and Donna Sharam has a new range of boxed coffee cups.

Plus our large array of hand-made



Teapot by No Mad Potter



and unique pieces in many forms – sculpture, ceramics, paintings and that special piece for the garden.

The \$50 gift voucher could give your budget a kick-along – or provide a special treat for yourself – so do remember to call into Nimbin Artists Gallery and collect your ticket.

'Eclectic Mix' and 'Eye Spy'

Two exhibitions by three local artists will fill the Roxy Gallery, Kyogle from 8th November until 9th December. Deborah and Rodney Brown have once again teamed up with Jenny Kitchener to present 'Eclectic Mix' and 'Eye Spy'.

The Brown's exhibition 'Eclectic Mix' includes landscape paintings inspired by the beautiful local scenery as well as country views of the U.K. As the title suggests, this exhibition is a mix of media that includes Rodney's portraits and still life paintings and Deborah's 3D fibre works and her photography. Deborah has also produced cards and notebooks depicting their paintings and photos which promote the beautiful Kyogle area.

Jenny Kitchener's exhibition, 'Eye Spy' gets up close and personal with birds and insects which Jenny finds to be fun. This colourful and engaging exhibition features beautiful birds and fascinating insects. The artwork in this show will explore and present some of the different ways we can view the natural world, whether through binoculars, magnifying glasses or with the naked eye.

Jenny is a well-known local artist and exhibits both locally and nationally. She works mainly with print media, producing both 2D and 3D works and artists' books. Linocuts, screen prints, monotypes, collages and mixed media works will be on display.

The exhibition opening will be from 5 to 7pm on Saturday 11th November.



'Old Lachlan Castle, Scotland' by Deborah Brown

Everyone is welcome.

Expressions of Interest are out now for exhibiting at the end of year / beginning of new year exhibition, 'Into The Light Of The New'. This exhibition provides artist with the opportunity to market their works over the Christmas-New Year period.

E.O.I forms are available at the gallery or email: roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au



Above: 'Sold out' by Jenny Kitchener

Below: 'Colour in Kew' by Rodney Brown



Desert Owl Dreaming

by Louise Mehta

Desert Owl Dreaming is the powerful wearable art of Ella Hamilton. She makes the wildest earrings you've ever seen, medicine pouches, chunky belts, necklaces, cowls and halters. She uses leather, animal bones, feathers, (crow, rooster, kookaburra, turkey) copper, fur, hemp twine, local seeds and wood from fallen branches.

Ella has a very earthy and nurturing energy. You can feel the magic emanating from her creations. Intrigued, I asked her the story behind her company name – Desert Owl Dreaming. Ella is a prolific dreamer and has used these visions to direct her work. Her recurring dream is of her happily standing in a red desert. When she travels to different countries, Ella heads straight into the deserts. Many creative ideas come to her while she is deep in the desert in real life and in her dreams. She works with the spirits of many animals as she creates, but it's owls above all other animals that are Ella's totem. Families of owls gather around her all the time!

Ella *never hunts* to get her skins and feathers. The animals and birds all die natural deaths and have lived full lives. Ella's friends know to gift her fresh skins if they find them! She salts the skins to clean them, then cures them with fish scales and egg whites. To create deeper colours, Ella soaks the skins in acacia, eucalyptus and wattle barks. She boils the bark, lets it cool then pours the juice on the skins. Sometimes she soaks the skins for months to get a really deep colour.

Ella began her career as an international aid worker in Burma, Thailand and Timor for 10 years. She became particularly inspired whilst with the tribal women as they wove fibres from their local plants. Ella set up co-operatives in these countries for these local women to sell their beautiful natural hand-dyed creations for a decent price. Upon returning to Australia, Ella made felt clothes. She made costume pieces for Melbourne's big stage shows and exhibited her own collection in the city. Big scale felting proved taxing on the body after a while and she craved to be out of the city. Luckily for us she chose the Northern Rivers and resides near Mebbin National Park with her husband Ed surrounded by wild Bubock owls. Ed studied Javanese Animism and



Mysticism at University in Indonesia which suits Ella as they have much in common!

Ella says, "Art makes me feel less alone. The main reason I started working in art is because I see a world that is being bulldozed into a monochromatic system of capitalism and in the process we are forgetting who we are. Art connected me to my essence as a creator. I fell in love with it and it became a natural extension of what I crave to see in the world: a return to the spirit, a return to connection and a deep orientation with the earth. My work comes from that deep relationship and respect to the natural world. My pieces are all hand stitched and hand tanned. No machine has touched it. It is humble and sacred and weaves its animal medicine into the wearer. My art speaks of a memory – the olde ways of being and invokes a magic that is timeless. It is my medicine."

By wearing these talismans, we remember the hidden psyche of the animal's spirit. Ella is completely self-taught and a shaman (that's me saying that, not her!) by her connection with the animal spirits. I want to be around this woman and soak up her gift of preserving animal magic, weaving her artist self into objects and her gentle medicine. She believes in the power of these animals and weaving new life into their old skins.

Ella's art pieces can be bought through her stunning Facebook site: *Desert OWL* and on Etsy site: *desertowldreaming*. She also has a stall at the following markets: Byron, Lismore carboot, Channing and Bangalow. She exhibits at our local trade fairs and folk festivals. She wants to expand to the Gold Coast and Brisbane markets.

Soul of the Soil and Forgotten Names

The Serpentine Community Gallery is very proud to be hosting *Soul of the Soil* and *Forgotten Names*, an exhibition of the recent work of two North Rivers artists, Kerry Negus and Robyn Staines.

Soul of the Soil is the culmination of four years of work for Kerry Negus as she finishes her Advanced Diploma of Visual arts at Lismore T.A.F.E. The exhibition contains both figurative ceramic sculpture and symbolic, narrative drawings.

Kerry's art speaks of connection and awareness of the sacred and essential relationships between ourselves and the planet. Rather than consuming blindly, with little awareness of where the things we use actually come from, *Soul of the Soil* promotes a small example of what can be created when we listen to and respect the land around us.

Kerry collects materials from her immediate



'Future Dirt', and 'Possum' by Kerry Negus

environment and transforms these into artist's tools. She makes paint, pencils, brushes, charcoal, inks and glazes. With these materials and tools, Kerry creates drawings on recycled paper and finishes her clay sculptures with glazes.

To start with dirt and sticks, connect with these materials and the land where they have come from, and then to be inspired to create artworks is an elemental part of Kerry's process - her work



is a collaboration with the earth.

Forgotten Names is an exhibition of both paintings and monotypes by Robyn Staines.

Robyn's work ponders the forgotten parts of our history and ancestry that were hidden in shame.

This is a telling of an untold story; one that acknowledges all those who were, once they were labelled disabled or lunatic, promptly forgotten. Children and adults with

disabilities and mental health issues were discarded and left to rot in asylums and institutions.

This body of work is an attempt to atone for those discarded by our historical records.

Both *Forgotten Names* & *Soul of the Soil* will be showing at the Serpentine Community Gallery at 17a Bridge Street in Lismore from the 1st to the 20th November 2017. You are welcome to join us for the opening on Friday



Monotype by Robyn Staines

3rd November at 6pm.

For more information, contact the Serpentine Gallery on 6621-6845.

We are very excited about our next members' exhibition, Azure, which explores the ideas & feelings that surround our notions of "blue". Azure invites you to enter the world of blue - the cool, the calm, the oceans and the sky. Or maybe you're feeling "blue", or singing the "blues" - maybe it's once in a blue moon. Perhaps the

one you love has beautiful blue eyes; there's the blue of sapphires, the glorious indigo of lapis; the flash of an azure kingfisher's wing...

All artist members are invited to participate in this last event for the year. This is our final members' show for 2017 so it will be a celebration to end another great year. Our doors open at 5pm and there will be music and art. Azure will run from the 28th November through to January, 2018

Stay tuned as this event develops.

"The deeper the blue becomes, the more strongly it calls man towards the infinite, awakening in him a desire for the pure and, finally, for the supernatural... The brighter it becomes, the more it loses its sound, until it turns into silent stillness and becomes white." – Wassily Kandinsky

The gallery is located at 17 Bridge Street, Lismore. For more info, phone (02) 6621-6845, or go to: www.serpentinearts.org

Energy Matters: Biking to global sanity

by Thom Culpeper

Where does the responsibility for the Earth lie if it does not lie with each of us and not the other or them? Frivolous energy consumption by happy-camping consuming is what is murdering this lovely, lonely globe.

Was the last time you kicked the fiver into "life", really necessary? How much of the stuff that was purchased really got used? Why is that Op-shops are filling to the brim with under utilised clothing and things? Many with the original purchase label still attached?

Was doing that Pacific cruise on a 'show-boat' of any use to the sea-life of a Pacific or any other islands' real existence and survival?

Is being an audience on every possible occasion for every possible event, not costly to society as a whole and to the finite Earth a moral or ethical disregard for a health of life itself? Can a demand (a consumer-driven) economy be ever as propriety-efficient as a command economy?

Evidence is now becoming manifest that an individual or even tribal consumer-prejudice-drivers cannot in any way be as globally useful

or sensitive enough to matter in matters of the Earth's survival.

Some argue that the body politic must be left to sort these imperative matters out, this position is now manifestly, tragically imperfect. Our world is being tragically shattered in every quarter, now by the powerful who have brought about a world bound in the horrid 'undeclared' global wars and so forth that have been bought by the avaricious societies on the weak and the poor.

It is not only the second and third but now the powerless, so called 'voters' of the first world: Louisiana, other climate-inundated military-junta, Banana-Republic America!

Puerto Rica? No power or water, weeks after their catastrophic climate revenge, and the American system has NO answer, demanding, "They should have lowered their debt". Banker and Fed. Vile, blackmail.

This bullshit is as hollow as the Wall Street banker-leach's bleatings that labour must take a pay and services cut demanded through their Washington Beltway and 'elected' stooges manipulating the energy, fiat-dollar.

So what, you say, and well you may. As Pete Seeger



sang after the vile Thatcher, 'Attila the hen' of the UK smashed the miners of Britain to hand energy control to North Sea oil and Wall Street, "Can't You See the System's Rotten, Through and Through". A seer! Hunted by the Senator Joe McCarthy's hounds. America is fast approaching a singular, world irrelevance.

On to biking. Start moving in an energy efficient way. Community and individual citizen biking, using battery assisted local people movers, is a way that you can contribute to lowering the

unmitigated cost of Earth destroying oil consumption. The sums on these matters still need to be looked at by aware engineering minds.

Battery assisted bikes are now capable of 50 kilometres at 20-25 kph. Enough to enjoy a local coffee, visit a lover, buy a 'sherbet' and fetch a fresh loaf of bread. Starting an 'oil guzzler' uses far more energy than your gams and a battery does!

The survival of the globe and its existence starts with you. Get energy consciousness and a future for you and yours. *Bike!*

Plant of the month

Flame Tree

Brachychiton acerifolius



by Richard Burer, Natural area restoration consultant

Yep, it's that time again, a Northern Rivers monsoon, the wet bringing on the glorious summer flower of the Flame tree.

It's an indigenous signature tree, bush food beverage and all round good reason as to why we all live here!

Two things about the

Flame tree for me is the carpets of red flowers that guide me to my front door, and the crazy happy lorikeets and busy bee action.

I've planted several on the farm in Nimbin over the years, one took at least 15 years to flower, while others have flowered after several years or less.

Easy to grow from seed, so have a crack.

Food matters

by Neil Amor

It's Spring and the bees are busy.

Honey has the largest mythological tradition in all the histories in the world. Greek mythology tells us that Zeus was raised on honey. Since ancient times honey has been used both as a food and a source of medicinal therapy. Hippocrates, wrote, "Honey and pollen cause warmth, clean sores and ulcers, soften hard ulcers of lips, heal carbuncles and running sores." Aristotle believed that honey prolonged life.

In the 5th century BC and later, archaeological evidence shows that bees were kept in ceramic beehives (large pottery jars) in which the interior had been incised before firing to provide a rough surface for the bees to attach the combs.

Honey bees not only produce honey, they also pollinate a major quantity of the crops we eat. It has been calculated that honey bees pollinate 70 of the 100 plant species that feed about 90% of the world population. If bees went extinct, most of the fruits and vegetables that we



Swarm of bees

consume would disappear. Plants cannot just replace their pollination partner, so in the short term, many plant species, as well as many wildflowers, would be seriously reduced.

Consider this: it takes the lifetime of 12 bees to make one teaspoon of honey! So value this precious (and delicious) resource.

Spiced apple and honey cake

3 free range eggs
100g rappadura sugar
70g of local honey

80g of softened, unsalted organic butter
300g of sifted organic self-raising flour
1 level tsp of cinnamon powder
3 organic apples

Preheat the oven to 180C and grease a 20cm-wide cake tin with softened butter. Dust the greased surface with a little flour.

Beat together the eggs, sugar and honey until the mixture is pale and fluffy. Add softened, unsalted butter and beat in. Add the sifted self-raising flour, cinnamon powder and the flesh of 3 apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1cm pieces. Mix gently, or at low speed if using a mixer.

Spoon the mixture into the cake tin and place in the oven for 45-55 minutes, making sure it is completely cooked in the middle before removing: test with a skewer - it should have no uncooked dough attached to it. Remove from the tin and cool on a cake rack.

Serve with a drizzle of organic maple syrup and some cream.

Get all your goodies at the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op. Until next month, eat well.

Farmers, fermenters, fibre artists



Stallholder Genevieve

by Michelle Agioritis

The Blue Knob Market is known for being something a little special and different. We frequently have talks and festivals, and in November it's all about growing.

In November the 'Grow from Seed' series of talks continues with Dolph Cooke speaking on the 4th about soil preparation, and Greg James on the 11th teaching us how to look after our seedlings after planting out in the garden. The Grand Finale is on the 18th - Charlie Serchen will round out the series and speak about how to rejuvenate a garden once the harvest is over and how to plan for successive seasons.

On the 25th, the market welcomes another local, Nathan Polglase, and his subject is 'Understanding Nature's Cycles'. Nathan adopts a holistic approach to land management on his property near Kyogle, which runs pigs, cattle, horses, chickens and grows food. We

look forward to Nathan generously sharing his own experiences with us.

The market takes this opportunity to gratefully thank all its speakers, past and future, for generously giving of their time and experience to promote information sharing and knowledge transfer - all for free.

In December the events continue, with the annual Christmas Market planned for 9th December. And, Cakestravaganza is scheduled for the 23rd - cake for all, courtesy of the market. Mark these dates in your calendar.

If you would like more information, or would like to have a stall at the Christmas Market, contact us via Facebook or phone Michelle on 0424-474-133.

Join our newsletter email list to receive a weekly update on special events, seasonal products and specials and stallholder news. Send a message to our Facebook page or let any stallholder know you want to join the list.

We're not just a market - we're a community.

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Flourishing

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

Still lots to be done on the creek banks post Cyclone Debbie. New weeds and the old ones are growing rampantly. The October rains brought much needed relief from the dry spell but, combined with some warm sunny days, now all the vegetation is flourishing.

There are ten new weed species each year, according to estimates by CSIRO. Weeds cost the agricultural sector \$1.5 billion in control measures and another \$2.5 billion in lost productivity. 15% of flora are exotic species. A quarter of these have potential to become serious environmental weeds if not already.

If you're looking to buy land, get a section 64 certificate from Council. This will let you know if there are current noxious weed notices on the property or money owing in this respect.

A vegetation survey is a must especially if you are not familiar with the local

species. And don't just check out your block. Look over the fence and see what's next door or upstream. Running bamboo running onto your rural dream will turn it into a nightmare. Privet and ragweed when they flower can make it impossible for people with allergies. Setaria grass is unsuitable pasture for horses and crofton weed will poison them. You don't want to move to the country to live the life, only to spend all your time dealing with intractable weeds that adversely impact on your lifestyle.

Giant Devil's Fig, now listed as noxious, can be daunting to tackle but persistence pays off. A little and often to avoid fatigue and follow up, follow up, follow up. This hardy, thorny tree can grow rapidly. Its extensive and deep root system will reshoot from fragments. Slashing a grove with a tractor will only make it worse. Stem fragments will readily regrow as roots can sprout along its length. If you prefer to avoid herbicides, place a black plastic bag



Black plastic kills Giant Devil's Fig stump

over the stump of large specimens. Lack of light will prevent growth and the heat and moisture will cause rot effecting a kill within three months.

The key with any land and weed management is the follow up. Dealing with weeds will never be a one off go. They will come back. Blown on the wind, carried by machinery – check the next tractor or bulldozer that comes on your place – how much plant debris is carried on them? Birds and other animals, do their bit, including the most invasive and destructive of all the animals – *Homo sapiens*.

Do your homework and make sure what you

introduce is not going to be a problem. Quarantine plants you buy from market and road side stalls, and even nurseries before you put them out in the garden. There could be seed material lurking. Two plants, or more, for the price of one.

Dispose of garden waste properly. Chipping, composting or making weed tea are useful methods. Don't chuck prunings and plant material down the gully or over the bank and never dump in bushland.



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Western institutional decline accompanies materialism

by Geoff Dawe

Without exception, all the institutions of Western society are in decline.

Education of children presently functions by stressing children with exams, Naplan testing and compulsory learning. Stressed children tend to become socially dysfunctional adults because they feel compelled to follow, or rebel against, the will of others rather than produce what they have innately brought to the world for the well-being of the world. The "Job" of children is merely to play. Then they are automatically "educated" because this is the maximally efficient means by which they understand, with depth, who they are and how they fit in with their environment.

The economic system is unable to conceive the environment is finite or that a competitive system will inevitably encourage greed. Greed is disguised by being euphemised as "progress".

The legal system is not a means of provisioning justice. It cannot deliver justice because centralised administration cannot deliver intimacy between the judge and the judged. Furthermore, it is based in punishment that is a dysfunctional attempt to amend a person's behaviour without attention to the societal causes of why a person has responded to a particular event with dysfunction.

In the building industry, housing has become more than just shelter, and the idea that a palace is greater progress than a thatched hut can only be justified in denial that heavy use of resources eventually kills a planet. It has also led to housing unaffordability.

In medicine, in common with all the institutions, the tendency for short-term thinking in neglect of human ability to think long-term, is the root cause of the inefficiency of the institution. Examination of the



causes of disease with conventional medicine contents itself with noticing vectors of disease such as bacteria and viruses but stops short of examining the environment or terrain, including the neglect of the human body, that encourages the development of pathogens.

In agriculture, centralised control of food and fibre production has limited diversity or polyculture in both wilderness and food and fibre producing systems. This, along with returning adequate nutrients to farms that is lost to cities, is the major reason for the introduction of a slew of toxins into the environment that contribute to medicine's quandary of how to produce a relatively non-toxic terrain.

Defence has always bogged down in lack of reason and communication of what actually constitutes a war of aggression or defence. Lack of communication and the ensuing neglect of the possibility of compromise, is more the cause of war than the aggrieved concerns of the warring parties.

Spirituality became dogmatised in "rightness" of points of view, and lost to the understanding that spirituality concerns itself with enquiry of how nothing is separate from anything else. This requires the synthesis of

religions in increasingly noticing their similarities rather than differences.

In politics there has been a split between the left and right that has divided people, led to reduced sociability and reduced understanding that people have an innate ability with expanded sociability to cooperate with each other. Expanded sociability potentially, is more effortlessly able to supply simplified livelihood. Movement toward centralised control through nationhood pathologised to totalitarianism during the 1930's with both the left and right. There is no sign centralised leadership has since become any more efficient. When the people lead the leaders follow.

Humans are so willing to regard technology as saviour that they are willing to step aside from their unique human abilities with rationality and the development of morality; they are willing to ignore their ability to access the long-term that enables them to notice with depth the harmful affects of technologies. Moreover, as Neil Postman writes in *Technopoly*, humans have entered a period when technology dependence has pathologised into people working primarily for the benefit of technologies rather than technologies being largely for the benefit of the people.

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To Own a Life

Outside my door awaits a multitude of encounters. These are not just encounters with the human world, with technology and ideas, but with the elements of the Universe – wind, sun, water and gravity. With creatures, and webs, and cascades of atomic reactions. They are encounters of the aeolian, hydrophilic, lunar and solar kind.

I try to remember not to close it. The door: that partition that superficially separates me from the rest of the world's creatures. I try to not close myself off from the world's breeze, the sun's magnificent light. But when the summer radiates a cruel heat, and the winter rain won't let up, I retreat to my version of the elaborate bowers us humans are inclined to build for ourselves.

The discipline of Biotecture is concerned with designing and constructing human living spaces, and how they "encounter" their world. These buildings, called Earthships, are arguably the ultimate examples of appropriate and sustainable building design.

This now-global phenomenon is the

brainchild of American former-architect (now biotech) Michael Reynolds, who was stripped of the right to practice as an architect by regulatory authorities pathologically adverse to the kind of innovation Reynolds advocated.

In particular, the Earthship's use of repurposed tyres, bottles and cans continues to draw not only the ire of the authorities, but many environmentalists, or would-be owner-builders, who were unable to come to terms with the notion that garbage is – must be – a resource, or must not be created at all.

In the 1970's, when Reynolds built a house out of aluminium cans, and regularly strapped himself into an observatory on its roof to contemplate the universe, the local authorities gladly followed up on neighbourhood complaints. So Reynolds went further out into the desert, further away from regulation, refining his designs amidst that myriad of earthly encounters.

His buildings were dome-shaped (and pointy, and spaceship shaped), with a glass greenhouse attached to the front to capture winter

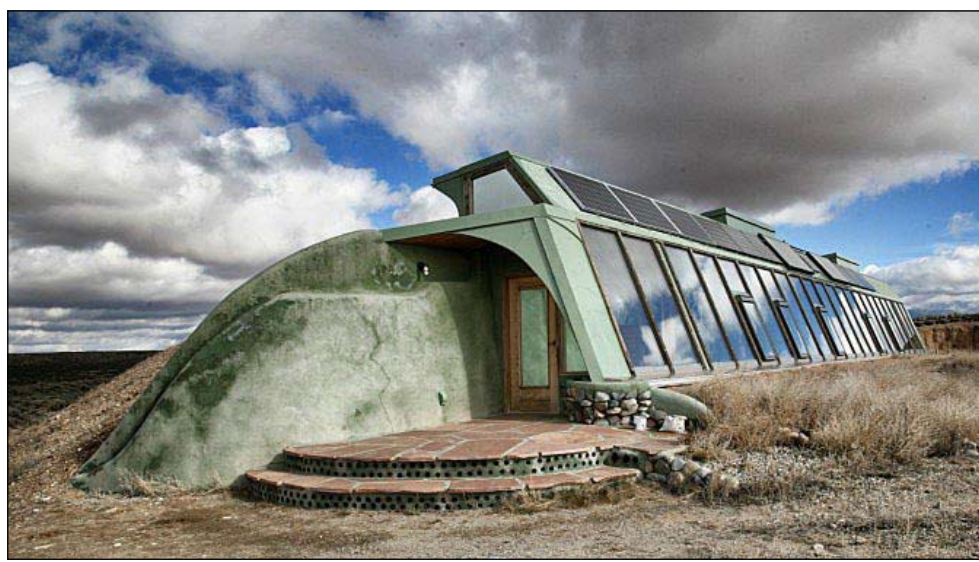


by Anastasia Guise

sun, and solar panels to make power from it. These buildings capture human waste and wastewater as resources to grow bananas while outside the desert is blanketed in snow.

During this experimental period, Reynolds designed and built the vertical axis windmill, which would go on to provide power for 22 years without any maintenance. Eventually, his Earthship model successfully provided everything he needed – including happiness. It was a happiness so profound he scared himself.

In that brief profound happiness, in between roasting pigeons and plucking prickly pear cactus,



Reynolds decided he must take what he had found back into the world. His journey to do that over the next 40 years is well documented in film, and in the hundreds of incredible Earthship dwellings around the world.

But it's the freedom embedded in the radical self-sufficiency of the Earthship model that strikes me so deeply: the freedom that comes from truly "owning your life". This is what we once had, before the commodification of every aspect of human life. We once worked to feed ourselves, and ate from the land, and in this there was a kind of freedom, where today we see only slavery.

I too pursued a rigorous self-sufficiency to not only take responsibility for my

own existence on the planet, but to compensate in part for the enormous footprint of others. But this was a lonely existence, and one which eventually saw me redirect my quest for self-reliance towards a localised inter-reliance instead.

After all, I share this planet with a cast of species and assemblages, all of whom have an impact on my world in some way, and me on theirs.

As a child, my father followed a river up a valley to a piece of land where he too found a place he could truly be himself, his life pared back to the simplicity of wood, soil and water.

Once, when he was an old man, seeing him isolated and alone, I worried for him. "I am so happy some days I

scare myself," he reassured me. "All I ever wanted was to be free."

The determination and conviction with which Reynolds pioneered the Earthship concept, and, importantly, its hundreds of exemplar buildings, is an inspiring tale.

But it's his decision to bring it to the world – and face the endless barrage of bureaucratic resistance and astonished critics – is the courageous act on which this story turns.

May we all have such courage and determination to be the change we want to see.

Anastasia is an author and environmentalist, writing on ecology, science and humanity. Facebook: [anastasiaguiseauthor](#)

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

The 2016-17 reporting year was incredibly demanding on Friends of the Koala. In terms of Koala Care Centre admissions, it was the busiest on record with 429 koalas from across the region admitted; over 40% more than in recent years.

We don't yet understand the reasons for the dramatic increase in numbers although weather (a mild, relatively short winter) and heightened awareness of FOK's role are probably factors. Nor can we predict the extent to which admissions will increase, if indeed they do.

The one constant is high mortality rates. During 2016-17 only 78 or 18% of koalas, including seventeen hand-raised joeys, brought into care recovered well enough to be returned to the wild. While 18% is lower than the 25% release rate for Queensland RSPCA's Wildlife Hospital at Wacol, it is much higher than Queensland NPWS's Moggill Koala Hospital's 8%.

Koala rescue and rehabilitation is a complex undertaking, often constrained by limited resources. Here in the Northern Rivers we are blessed with excellent local veterinarian services as well as specialist expertise available at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. We take pride in our rapid response record and the experience and knowledge of our carers. Even so, there's no question that release rates are disappointingly low.

Disease, mostly chlamydia, but also Koala retro-virus (KoRV) accounted for 159 koala deaths or 48% of known koala mortalities in the Northern Rivers last year. Healthy koalas live most of their lives high in the canopy,



largely unnoticed by humans. Even koalas displaying clinical signs of disease can cope for quite a long time in the wild. By the time a koala is so sick that it comes to our attention because it's low in a tree or even on the ground, it's usually too late to bring it back to health.

Vehicle strikes and dog attack also take a heavy toll on koalas. 86 koalas were killed on the road in the reporting year, nearly twice as many as in 2015-16, while 26 koalas died because of dog attack, just a couple more than in the previous year.

The impacts of koala disease, vehicle strike and predation by dogs are acknowledged by the NSW Government's Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Project to be three of twelve critical threats to koala survival. The Priorities Action Statement (PAS) for the Koala which outlines the strategies for recovery and threat abatement was amended in 2016 in the form of an 'action toolbox' which was released a couple of months ago.

The action for koala disease is as follows. In association with relevant research groups, improve understanding of:

- koala disease impacts across the state
 - disease-related population dynamics and mortality
 - koala disease management and treatment
- Formalise a protocol for collection, analysis and reporting of samples for analysis of koala disease.

By 2021 it is expected that:

- a state-wide protocol for collection, analysis and reporting of samples for both disease and baseline genetic information is developed and operational
- a disease profile for NSW koalas is improving our understanding of and response to koala disease.



Tim is an urban koala – released towards the end of May having spent nearly four months in care, he's back being treated for chlamydia

In this financial year \$80,000, 10% of the total investment in the Koala Project is allocated to developing a state-wide profile of koala disease in NSW, using existing information and new data from the field. We're encouraged that the NSW Government is finally getting serious about the role of disease and disease management in the broader koala conservation challenge. Disappointing that nearly half way into the financial year no information is available on the project's development or who will be involved.

Turning now to some regional research which has got off the ground and is using a multidisciplinary approach to identify and analyse social-ecological processes in koala recovery. Titled *Conserving and recovering the koala populations on NSW's Far North Coast*, the three year project aims to extend our

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, phone: (02) 6622-1233

For information about koalas and conservation, or to book a tour, please visit www.friendsofthekoala.org or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org 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.

knowledge of koala distribution and increase understanding of how local landholders and land managers respond to koala recovery programs and what motivates long-term engagement.

The research team drawn from The University of Queensland, Southern Cross University and The University of Sydney is working with Friends of the Koala and Lismore, Ballina, Byron and Tweed councils. Central to the project is a community study 'Koalas in Community Spaces' which aims to understand people's attitudes towards koalas and their opinions on how community spaces could be best managed for their conservation. Part of the study will be an online survey, details of which will be announced very soon. If you're interested in participating, watch out. We're hoping the project will be the start of a long-term strategic research alliance between the three universities, the four councils and Friends of the Koala which will indeed ensure a secure future for our koala populations.

Maintaining your bone density

by Cameron Storey

Bone are alive and active. Starting before birth, bones undergo constant turnover, such that the total bone mass is replaced about every three years. The continual process of bone dissolving and bone formation continues until death.

Osteoporosis is a progressive disease, ('osteo' means bone and 'porosis' means porous), where the bone loss is greater than the bone formation. The calcium is being eroded away from the inner bone matrix faster than it is being replaced and measured as bone density decreases.

Osteoblasts become osteocytes, both bone building cells, and osteoclasts are the bone dissolving cells. Osteoporosis is the reduction of the trabecular bone mass that forms the inner bone matrix and not the outer cortical layer of bones.

Men also lose bone mass over time, but not as rapidly as women do. It's estimated that one in three Australian men over sixty has osteoporosis, whereas two out of every three women over sixty have osteoporosis.

The three most common

osteoporotic fractures are the vertebrae, femoral neck (thigh bone/hip) and radius bone (lower arm bone). There is also a 25% mortality rate in the first year after a hip fracture. The higher your bone density, the less chance you have of getting osteoporosis and osteoporotic fractures.

Risk factors for osteoporosis are: female, caucasian, cigarette smoker, alcohol consumption, acidic diet, steroid medications, rheumatoid arthritis, history of osteoporotic fracture, and parental history of osteoporotic fracture.

It's never too late and you are never too old to transform bone density, your bones are constantly listening to your lifestyle, what you do and what you don't do.

Oestrogen inactivates the osteoclasts and slows bone reabsorption by only about 1% per year, whereas testosterone, progesterone and growth hormone-like molecules truly dominate bone turnover by stimulating the osteoblasts to build new bone at rates from 8% to 15% per year.

Progesterone inhibits the action of the enzyme aromatase (which usually converts testosterone to

oestrogen) and as such it preserves testosterone which stimulates new bone growth.

Bone mass peaks around 25 years in most people and declines at around 1% per year until around 80 years. So regardless of oestrogen production, from 25 to 50 years the rate of decline in bone mass continues anyway, caused by the natural depletion of growth hormone and testosterone – about 1 to 2% per year. (*Clinical Endocrinology and Infertility*, 2005, by Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins).

The more acidic your diet, the more protein and more sodium the more calcium is leached from the bones and out through your urine. Both hyperthyroidism and hyperparathyroidism both cause osteoporosis which should encourage us to practice shoulderstand and plough which flush blood through and maintain the health of our thyroid and four parathyroid glands.

Four studies in the *American Journal of Medicine* show strong links between hip fracture and fluoride. So avoid fluoridated water.

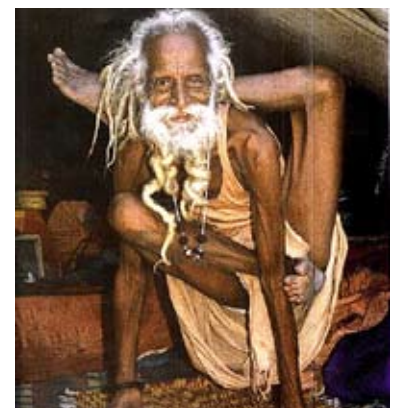
"No matter what your age, the lower

your bone density the lower your bone strength and the greater the likelihood of a fracture. What you do throughout your life: your lifestyle, your state of health, what you eat and how much you exercise you do does affect how health and strong your bones are."

– Dr P. Kelly and S. Thompson.

Maintaining bone health is a combination of: meeting your calcium requirements from fruits, vegetables and seaweed, etc; being a healthy weight for your height; exercising regularly (including balance training to prevent falls); pure water; sunlight exposure; not smoking; limiting animal protein (acidic); minimise alcohol (acidic); soda (acidic); and caffeine (acidic) consumption; and stimulating progesterone, testosterone and growth hormones. Sunlight exposure is responsible for not only adequate vitamin D levels but also stimulates testosterone which directly builds bone mass.

In a multi-university study over a ten year period participants, with an average age of 68 years and 83% osteoporotic, were asked to practice only 12 minutes of beginners level yoga postures daily, mostly standing postures and a few



twists, significantly increased BMD (bone mineral density) and reversed osteoporotic bone loss in both the spine and femur safely.

In the future, studies will show stronger yoga postures which generate much higher weight bearing figures will create improvements in all bones especially upper thoracic bones and arm bones. When it comes to weight-bearing on bones, yoga has you covered with one-legged standing poses, arm balances, sitting balances, inversions on the head, hands, shoulders or forearms.

The Dharma Centre on Lillifield Community has four yoga classes a week. Phone 02 6689-7120 or check out our Facebook page: 'Dharma Centre – Lillifield' for more details and directions.

Caring for our old people Validation: Part 2

by Betti Wille

Validation is a method that has been developed to aid meaningful interactions with our very old, disoriented people. Alzheimer's and related types of dementia come with challenges in communication and understanding.

Cultivating dignity, respect and empathy is fundamental to this way of communicating. Validation also offers insights into seemingly erratic behaviours.

Part 1 of this article (in last month's NGT) explained how human life asks for resolution of unfinished business when our time is running out.

Especially, suppressed emotions may play up with pressure, like a stirring volcano.

What if I have not learned how to express my emotions?

I may be restlessly driven by that fiery force but fearfully avoiding its source. I will probably project my issues onto something or somebody else. Acting it out in one way or another could be my only option. If resolution can't be achieved in this way, I might give up in the end and retreat into a completely isolated world of my own.

Validation is Naomi Feil's life work. It's been applied successfully for decades now, improving well-being for our differently oriented old people as well as their caregivers.

Fundamental is the service towards the basic human needs for love (to love and to be loved), identity and the need to express emotions. A central statement is: "There is a reason behind every behaviour."

Training in Validation is currently not available in Australia. However, some of the techniques are well-known and/or simple enough to be described here. If you are caring for an old, disoriented person you may find some of this useful.

A basic technique for the caregiver is called *Centering*. To centre myself I breathe deeply into the centre of my body about two inches below the waist. I acknowledge all the feelings that I am carrying at the moment. Exhaling, I let go, empty the slate. It's recommended to do this slowly and about eight times.

People may be disoriented but there's a basic humanity that always remains intact. As long as we're alive we feel pain, seek comfort and access intuitive knowledge like sensing the integrity of people around us.

If our old mum is looking for her mother who is long dead, she may actually be looking for the comfort and safety of mother. Instead of diverting her by saying something like "She'll be back later. Shall we have a game of patience?" I could inquire with empathy: "You love her very much, don't you? Tell me about your mum."

Symbols are often used to express emotions that are too hard to express directly. The wedding ring is a good example; it stands for all things related to marriage. If a wedding ring is a re-occurring issue, it carries a message. "What was it like to be married to ... ?" asked in a soft, low tone of voice may open up the space for it to be conveyed, given that I can be trusted. If so, I can grant



the wonderful gift of genuine listening.

Mirroring, as in matching another person's body language and tone of voice, indicates willingness to understand and partake in the other person's feelings. It's an invitation to trust.

Rephrasing is a clear sign of understanding. And it can be comforting to hear your own words spoken by someone else. "So he cheated on you without even admitting it once?"

When using **Polarity**, ask the person to think about the most extreme example of his or her complaint. "Is this the worst food you've ever eaten?" There can be relief in expressing worst case scenarios.

Reminiscing: Exploring the past can re-establish familiar coping strategies. Using words such as "always" or "never" can be helpful, e.g. "Did you always have a hard time sleeping? Even when your partner was alive?"

To learn more about Validation, visit: www.vfvalidation.org

If you're caring for a loved one, please don't neglect the care for yourself. Ask for respite before you're suffering signs of burn out. If you live in the Nimbin area, NACRS (Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services) might be able to help. Give us a call: 6689-1709.

Why yoga does what it does

by David Ward

One of my students recently asked me why yoga has been found to be so effective in overcoming addiction and mental health issues. In response I referred to a recent Coventry University study that showed that mind-body interventions such as yoga, meditation and Tai Chi are able to reverse negative reactions in our DNA.

When our sympathetic nervous system is triggered during stress, the fight or flight response is ignited and we produce a molecule called Nuclear Factor B (NF-kB), which in turn plays a part in gene expression.

A leading American yoga master Baron Baptiste, the main inspiration behind my personal transformation speaks of the daily practice of yoga impacting us on a molecular level. In terms of my own experience, I can testify this to be true.

My long-term dependence on a range of substances was miraculously and permanently resolved within weeks of committing to my daily yoga. I still had the same life stresses to contend with though the chains of habits formed over a lifetime were inexplicably dissolving before my eyes.



The Coventry University study further talks of NF-kB as turning on genes to make proteins (cytokines) that spark inflammation in our cells. This is just what we need in order to respond to a stressful situation, but if it is continually turned on, it raises the risk of cancer, speeds up aging, causes depression and leaves us vulnerable to addiction. MBIs, (yoga, meditation and the like), when committed to, were seen to lower the production of Nuclear Factor B, reversing the gene expression that causes inflammation, reducing the tendency towards conditions like depression and addiction.

My practice so far has given me 11 years of freedom and control, without the slightest cravings, also any sense of depression has steadily faded throughout that time. This resonates strongly with the findings of this study, something has indeed changed at a cellular level, and there appears to be no going back. This is the magic of yoga.

The Vital Choices Program offers proven strategies to end all addictions. Phone David on 0447-820-510.



Lead investigator, Ivana Buric, from Coventry University's Centre for Psychology, Behaviour and Achievement

Management of horses on the lush grass

by Les Rees, Equine Naturopath

Having written the October article on the effects of seasonal change after a drought, a few people have been requesting more information concerning horse management now that the lush grass is in abundance.

Grazing management is particularly important for horses that live on improved pasture which was originally intended for cattle due to the grass varieties planted.

Grasses with high sugar levels increase palatability and are planted to obtain weight gain and high milk production in cattle. The high carbohydrate levels in these grasses also promote early spring growth which enables them to survive long periods of drought during the winter.

These grasses are great for grazing cattle but for horses the high levels of non-structural carbohydrates and fructans can have devastating consequences triggering insulin resistance, colic and laminitis.

Insulin resistance (IR) – Can be seen when horses consume an overload of calories that cannot be utilised by the normal energy requirements of the body.

This overload is stored as fatty tissue which can be called upon when energy levels are depleted. When fat storage becomes too high it causes metabolic problems. Symptoms can include:

- Abnormal weight gain or weight loss
- Excessive water consumption
- Bloating
- Loss of muscle tone
- Laminitis
- Colic

Colic – There are several types of colic and they can vary from light to severe pain, so it's important to take aversive action immediately. Symptoms can include:



- Pawing at the ground
 - Licking and biting the flank
 - Rolling or wanting to lie down
 - Not drinking
 - Unable to defecate
 - Lack of appetite
 - Excessive sweating
 - Abnormally high pulse rate (over 50 beats per minute)
 - Lack of normal gut noises
 - Frequent attempts to urinate
 - Anxiety
- Laminitis** – Recognising the signs of laminitis can be challenging during the early stages: symptoms are often missed until laminitic changes in the feet have occurred. Symptoms can include:
- Heat in the hooves for periods of over two hours
 - Strong digital pulse – the digital artery runs through the groove between the flexor tendons and the suspensory ligament. To feel the pulse, run your hand down where the artery continues down the back of the fetlock.
 - Ring lines in the hooves
 - Raised heart rate
 - Overweight

- Shifting the weight back towards the haunches, stretching legs out in front
- Shortened stride lengths, particularly apparent on hard surfaces

Horse management – Horses that are prone to colic, laminitis and/or IR and overweight horses and ponies can easily trigger problems when allowed to feed on lush pasture, and need to have limited grazing. It is also advisable for other horses to be restricted during the heat of the day as fructan levels in grass gradually rise until around 3pm, and begin to drop down around 9pm.

It is particularly important this year, because we have been going through a drought and now there is a sudden lush growth producing high fructan levels in the pasture. A number of clients are already having problems with their horses!

Pasture – Over grazed paddocks have higher fructan levels than lush grass and are best avoided, move horses around paddocks to avoid stressing the pasture.

Restricted Grazing – Overnight grazing- supplement with low sugar hay during the day. Horses are trickle feeders and need to keep their digestive function turning over.

Herbal support – using herbs to support digestive, hepatic, endocrine, circulatory and lymphatic function can help the body maintain balance.

It's important to remember that any horse can develop symptoms of colic, insulin resistance and/or laminitis so it pays to be careful by limiting grazing. It pays to be aware especially of weight gain during the season and keep an eye out for any of the above the symptoms.

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The Passenger Game

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

This is a great game to play with any horse that has a rusty 'go button'. It develops forwardness in the horse, gets snappy responses to leg aids, builds horse and rider communication/relationship and develops the riders' seat. Horses that won't go can seem 'lazy' when in fact they're 'blocked'. When they have pressure applied to move they may buck or pig root. It seems strange that these same horses that appear quiet and slow can be the very ones that will suddenly squeal and twist and turn and buck. This is how they're letting their energy out. It makes sense to show them an appropriate method of energy release. Other horses won't move forward because their response to the go aid has been de-trained. These horses are the result of people riding incorrectly and not releasing when the horse responds to the go aid. I first came across this game in a Parelli book. I have used it extensively over the years with all sorts of horses and had great results. I also find it can have a profound effect on humans too. You will need a small enclosed area. Ask your horse to

move forward but don't steer at all. Apply the legs (or whatever your go aid is) until the horse moves, then release immediately. Do not hassle the horse to move faster at first, if it's moving at all leave it alone. Once they get the idea you can reapply your aid to get the faster walk, then release. When the horse stops, reapply the leg, then when it moves, release. That's all you have to do. With no steering and no stopping all your riding has come down to one thing only, going. Bringing something down to one component is the best way to teach horses. The rules of the game are no stopping, no eating (use the reins to prevent this then release) and no steering. At first your horse will be a bit confused as they have to decide for themselves where to go. Most will go to the gate, the corner, the adjoining fence where other horses are etc. If you find yourself in a corner resist the urge to pick up the reins. Just apply the leg; all horses are capable of getting themselves out of a corner. Some will go in tiny circles for ages before finally realising they can go further. All of this is normal, just relax and enjoy the ride.



Not controlling the horse in this way gives the rider an enhanced ability to 'feel' their horse. You will have no time to prepare for a turn as you won't know when it's coming. You will have to follow the horses' body with your own. This helps riders to feel the horse under them better, let go and let their body become one with the horses' body. At some point your horse will be moving forward freely. At this point pick up the reins and ask them to halt. You can leave it there if you're happy with the progress or do it again, but remember not to overdo it, especially if it's new, and try and leave on a high note. We're all guilty of continuing when something gets really good, only to

find that it starts going backwards a bit because the horse is losing concentration or is tired. This results in leaving that moment in the horses' memory. It's much better to stop just at the point where it's going really well, and not get greedy. Once you've entered a comfort zone with the above exercise at the walk, try it at trot. This is so much fun and fabulous for teaching the riders' body to follow the horses' body. Remember this is a game, don't get too serious, just relax and enjoy the ride!

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