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By Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
Adapted from Shaun Tan's multi-award children's book

19 September 2017, 11am & 6pm
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Blue Knob exhibitions

A Place of Dreams and Nimbin Seniors 'Snap My Community' photographic exhibition

These are the two current exhibitions at Blue Knob Hall Gallery.

Having these two shows running concurrently has been a perfect kind of symmetry as many if not all the images in 'Snap my Community' express a wonderful sensibility of a place, of a town that is enjoyed, places where people find calm, enjoyment and a place to dream or rest.

All the entries in the competition have been hung, along with the prize winners so if you didn't get a chance to see them first time around they are all worth seeing.

The artists that have exhibited in Blue Knob Hall Gallery's 'A Place of Dreams' have produced work that has created an ethereal sense of a place that dreams could inhabit. The exhibition has a dreamy, light feeling and the response to the theme by the artists has produced some interesting artworks in paintings, sculpture, cloth and ceramics.

An installation of a bed, netting and video by Christine Wynyard and Heather Kimber has found its mark with people; they have been enjoying the sense of a bed in a public place, taking

a rest under the netting, and sometimes a quick nap.

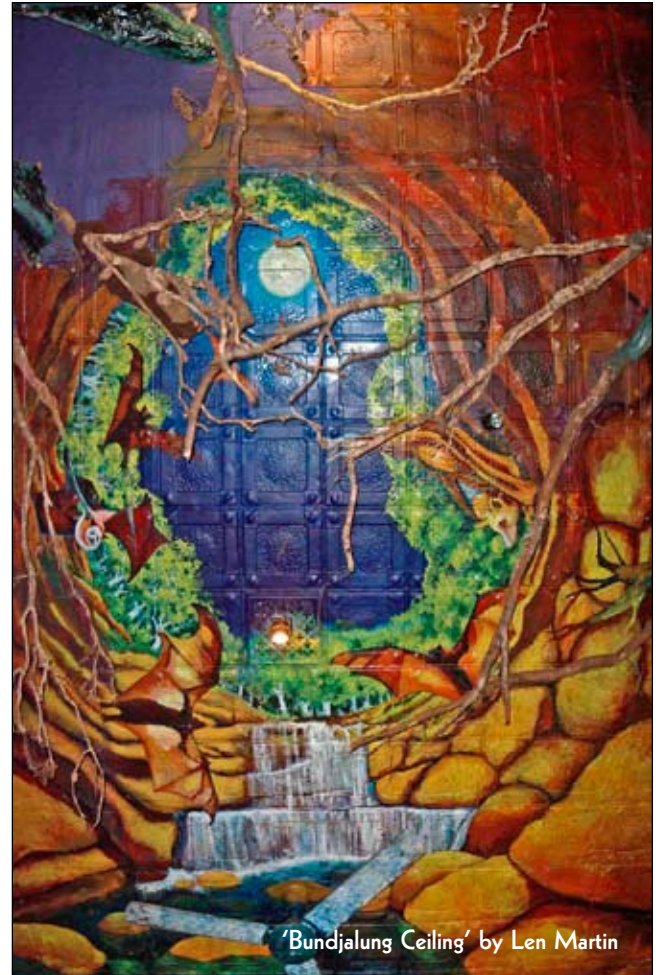
Selections of Len Martin's photographic images of the interior of the Nimbin Museum are delights to the eye, as so many of us remember what an artwork the whole exterior and interior was. These images were taken between December 2004 and February 2005 and are a treasure for the community as a whole after the Museum was lost by fire.

Many a dream has been fulfilled in this place/town where a different kind of life can be lived. When we are free to follow our dreams we can be lead into a creative life or a life filled with all that has meaning for us.

Both exhibitions run concurrently until Saturday 24th September.

Blue Knob Ceramic Studio

Blue Knob Ceramic Studio students and potters had a fabulous day out on Sunday 20th visiting studio potteries on the Mud Trail over at the Coast. The Mud Trail is an annual event and 21 students/potters and friends climbed into a bus and descended on the studios with enthusiasm and excitement. With plenty of coffee and cake at each venue to keep the energy going, it was an inspiring trip with a huge

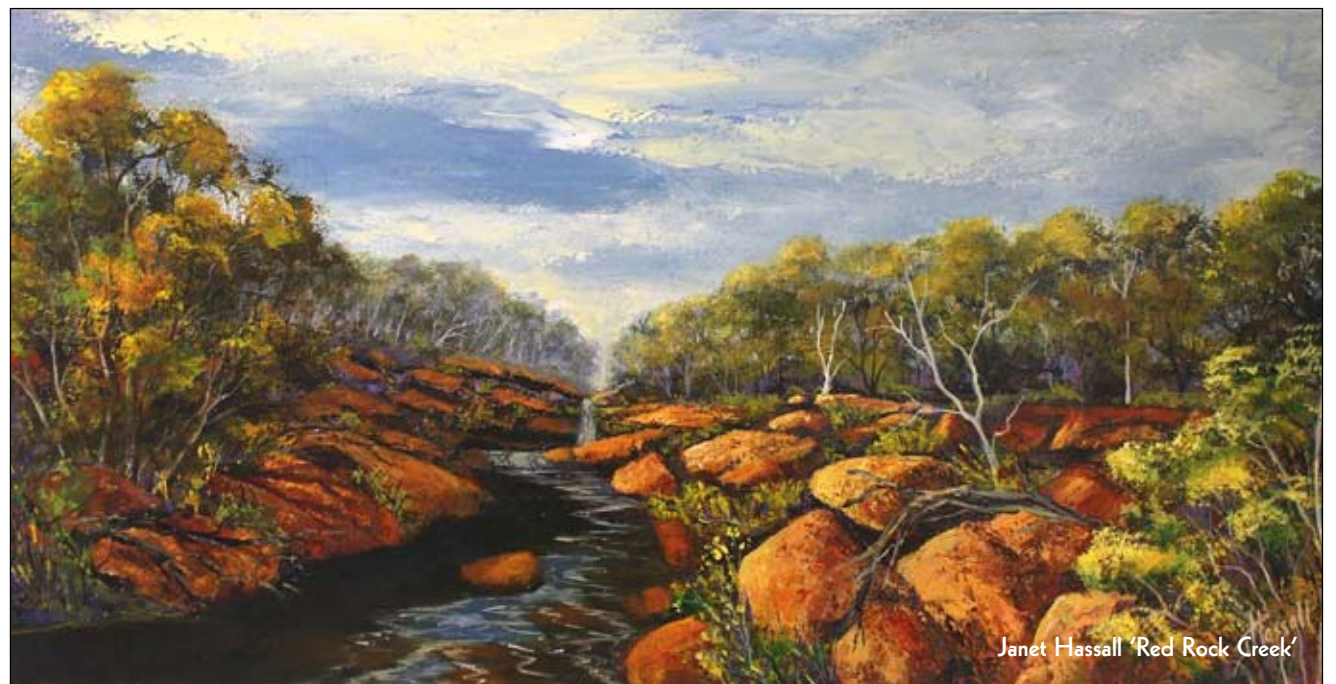


'Bundjalung Ceiling' by Len Martin

variety of techniques, firing and decorating to fire the imagination and hopefully fill the kiln at Blue Knob Ceramic Studio. It was a great 'field trip' and we look forward to the possibility of the Blue Knob Ceramic Studio being part of the Mud Trail next year.

Artists & Friends Lunch

The next Artist's & Friends Lunch will be held on Thursday 21st September at 12.30pm with a set menu, \$20 per person for main and dessert. Please email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au or phone 6689-7449 for more information.



Janet Hassall 'Red Rock Creek'

Artists awarded

Congratulations go to two of Nimbin Artists Gallery's exhibiting artists, Janet Hassall and Maria Heaton, for their success at the 2017 Bentley Art Show.

Janet won the major Section 1 Landscape prize in this year's event. Landscapes have always featured heavily in Janet's work. Her style, brush work and use of strong and evocative colours draws the viewer deep into our Aussie landscapes, be it rural homesteads or rocky creeks.

Our special feature artist, Maria Heaton also had recognition of her work, winning the RSM Club Acquisition Prize.

Now, are you a collector, or fan, of Jean Cooke's ceramics? Well, Jean has decided to start easing down her range and through-put, so get in quick for adding to your collection, or finding replacement pieces. Teapots have ceased production, as has her dark blue and black colour range, but all others are still available, and will be



Jean Cooke's ceramics

over the next year or so. Currently the Nimbin Artists Gallery features works by all three artists, and with the Spring Arts Exhibition in Nimbin Town Hall this month, a visit to both venues is highly recommended.

And finally, a date to put into your calendar: 7th November will be the 20th anniversary of Nimbin Artists Gallery. Time flies, doesn't it?

In the meantime, enjoy all the lovely art on offer this Spring.



'Darklands' by Benjamin Jai

September at Serpentine Gallery

Yang

Serpentine Community Gallery is currently the venue for 'Yang', a members' exhibition investigating and celebrating the "masculine" part of the gender duality.

Works by artists of the Northern Rivers present the light yet impregnable male, balanced with a little touch of the dark, fecund feminine; the full potential as male containing female, or an amalgam of these forces, balanced as sacred energies.

On view until 18th September, 'Yang' represents the wholistic masculine in all his MANifestations: fatherhood, passion, growth, brightness – all that is structured and firm: our inner strength.

SubTerania

Opening on 22nd September from 6pm, 'SubTerania: Subliminal Terrain' is a new body of work from local visual artist Benjamin Jai,

which will be on view until 2nd October.

The works in 'SubTerania' are mixed media paintings on canvas that broadly feature stripped-back, minimal fields of colour. Mostly devoid of figures and formations, these compositions give a sense of space, allowing for the subtleties of paint to emerge through colour, line, texture and reflective effects.

Sumptuous gradients of saturated colour are juxtaposed light upon dark across a luminous horizon line, suggesting terrain but also resisting the definition of landscape by being resolutely abstract.

In other works there is no horizon, but a haze of overall colour blended with robust licks of thick luscious paint, producing subtle variations of tone and texture. They can be vaguely suggestive of forms found in nature, but sublimated through memory as represented solely in

the direct process of paint applied on canvas. Again, these works are resolutely abstract; the result of broad gestures emerging through layers of luminous colour.

Benjamin Jai started life in Sydney, and after travelling, working, studying and living in various cities and regions, based himself in Lismore almost 20 years ago. In this time, he has managed to raise and homeschool two children while completing an honours degree in visual arts at SCU and developing his arts practice.

He has been creating and exhibiting work since 1988, some of which can be found at: <http://benjaminjai.net>

Everyone is welcome to attend the opening event. Light refreshments will be available.

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

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME!

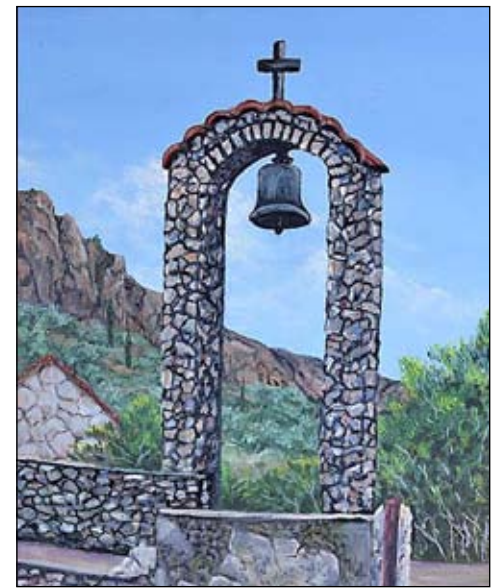


The colours of Greece bring Spring to the Roxy Gallery with a new exhibition by local Cedar Point artist Ruth Riordon. 'It's All Greek To Me!' is the title Ruth has given to this exhibition, which depicts the sights and surrounds absorbed by Ruth from her numerous visits to Crete.

Ruth has a great interest and affiliation with the island of Crete and this connection stems back to her father, Frank Ezzy. Frank fought in the Middle East, Greece and Crete from 1940 and was taken prisoner.

He escaped the POW camp with two other Australians. These three men then became sheltered by a Cretan farmer. This farmer and his family cared and sheltered these men for two years before they were finally evacuated in 1943.

Ruth's journeys to this island retracing her father's footsteps to find descendants of the Georgiakakis Family of Koustogerako, has



grown into a strong connection with both the land and the peoples.

She has retraced her father's story in this her second major exhibition focusing on the peoples and landscape of this beautiful part of the world. Ruth captures in this body of work a story of how landscapes from two different continents link up to tell a stronger story of fragility, vulnerability, delicateness and commonality

'It's All Greek To Me!' will be exhibited until 30th September, with the official opening event taking place on Thursday 7th September from 6pm.

Images of Uki

This year's Images of Uki art exhibition is on the theme 'Manifestations of the imagination', and will feature all art mediums.

The exhibition will run from 14th to 17th September at Uki Hall,

as part of the Ukitopia Festival. Opening night on Thursday 14th at 6.30pm will also feature a fashion parade followed by a mini-cabaret.

Contact Lorraine for more info at: lintern@tpg.com.au



Spirits fly at 2017 Laura Dance Festival

by Dionne May

Close your eyes, still the mind as ancient rhythms reverberate through dusty soil and clap sticks strike and echo.

Winter skies hang still and blue here in the tiny town of Laura, as Aboriginal dance groups from all over the Cape region of far north Queensland converge to compete for the illustrious Dance Shield of the 35th Laura Dance Festival.

Not simply a festival, this is a cultural celebration of traditional dance and story-telling and a place for the distant mobs to reconnect. Ancient dances endemic to each individual region are performed in a sacred bora ring over three days



culminating in a dance-off for the coveted shield for both junior and senior groups.

With well over 30 dance teams with up to fifty dancers in each group, the competition was hotly contested and the energy, pride and spirit being 'danced up', grew every day.

This year over 9000 people made their way from all over the globe to witness and share in this moving experience. Tracey Ludwick, this year's festival manager said the dance festival had been held in Laura since 1992 and was originally only for indigenous people, but now it's more about "sharing our culture".

We are camped beside the Laura River, nestled amongst mysterious rocky ranges that are dotted with caves strewn with aboriginal paintings. Eagles glide on heavenly currents overhead while elders of sixty thousand years listen and watch.

A group of young aboriginal boys traipse past our camp to sit and play in the river, jumping from the branch of an ancient paperbark tree into the clear water and hauling themselves up the steep side by an old rope.

In the crowd of campers sits a young 'city' aboriginal girl. Her school class from the suburbs of Brisbane are on the school excursion of a lifetime. Separated as a baby from her roots she sits poised, unwittingly in the audience. Sean Choolburra, well known comedian and the festival's MC announces the name of an Elder on stage and deep within this young girl comes her own surprised and unexpected voice crying out, "That's my father!" She is clearly heard amongst the crowd.

Re-united with her father and tribal elder on traditional land before our eyes was for me the very



Photos: James Henry Photography

essence of this gathering.

The festival was for the first time in history a three-way tie between Lockhart River, Mayi Wunba (from Kuranda) and the Bamaga Dance teams. The Junior section was won by Seisa and the Injinoo Dancers were awarded the Director's Pick award.

Special mention was given to the Coen Dancers for their dance titled "Shackles", a haunting dance with men in huge chains being led away as their women wailed and moaned.

A heartbreaking portrayal of a tragic time in aboriginal history. As the cries rose up amongst the dusty and darkening sky, all paused and reflected, letting collective tears help soothe old wounds.

The Laura Dance Festival will again rise up in 2019... for more stories to be told and danced, for more families to reconnect and for a sharing of the oldest culture on our planet. It is something that will stay with me forever.

Plant of the month

Creek bottlebrush *Melaleuca viminalis*

by Richard Burer

Spring is here when the bright red flowers of this bottlebrush put on their stunning red show. Usually accompanying the flowers are birds, especially honey eaters, who are the pollinators of this endemic species.

A multi trunked shrub or tree, creek or weeping bottlebrush can often be found on any of the more open creeks in the Nimbin area. A great stand can be viewed as you cross the Tweed River on the way to Wollumbin, where a fine stand is hugging the shallow parts of the river and river bank, its tiny fine seed being able to lodge and germinate in the crack of a rock or a layer of sandy loam.

Possibly one of the most



horticulturally propagated plants in Australia, cultivars of *melaleuca viminalis* are widely used in landscape plantings and in gardens.

Creek bottlebrush or weeping bottlebrush is an excellent tree in helping revegetation of creek banks, and is also a great garden/windbreak or shelter belt species.

Easy to propagate.

Fermenting ploys – Rice-Lentil *Idlis* of South India

Manna Matters

by Thom Culpeper

This dish, a savoury, steamed rice-cake is offered as an example of what is a traditional fermented food of regional India.

Sometimes known as 'Idly', many variations are made of this ferment, a method from Tamil Nadu is offered.

Idli in ancient forms is mentioned in a number of historical texts, the fermented form is mentioned in texts after 1250CE. It is thought to have originated in the kitchens of the Hindu kings of the 'Indianised' kingdoms of what is now political Indonesia.

Current thinking on matters of health are re-looking at what is now talked of as 'Paleo', a movement that looks historically to what could be described as the pre-fridge age, (not of course to those who live above the Arctic circle, the 'Perma-frost' zones. There, cold holds.)

Salt and fermentation, which, in the main, is supported by salt (NaCl), together with desiccation (drying) were the main methods of managing cross-seasonal famine and allowing continuing dependable sustenance, whereas heat and precipitation aided food contamination and breakdown.

All life forms must return to their origins. "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust..."

Science now has an informed grasp of these ancient wisdoms, and we may now practise these 'old' arts with a new confident alacrity.

Idli

Ingredients

4 cups of parboiled rice, white whole rice or brown rice
1 cup of husked 'gram' (urad dal) (black mung, *Vigna mungo*)
1 cup of cooked rice or 'cream of rice'
3 tsp of fenugreek (*menthi*)
3 tsp of cooking salt (aids fermentation)

Method

Soak the four cups of rice with the fenugreek and the one cup of urad dal, separately for a day or overnight.

If you have a wet-grinder, grind thoroughly the rice and fenugreek, if not use a food processor.

De-bowl and set aside the rice and grind the urad dal to a fine paste in the bowl, balancing with water. Grind again, until silky.

Blend the two grinds and add salt. Cover and set aside for a day to ferment. Blend together and spoon into several oiled small bowls and steam



for 10 minutes on high lower heat and further cook for 5 minutes, or pressure cook for 10 minutes. Rest and loosen.

Serve with chutney, samba or idli podi.

Idli podi

100 gms chick peas (*channa dal*)
100 gms black 'gram' (*urad dal*)
5-8 dry red chillies
½ tsp sesame seed (*til*)
pinch of asafoetida
salt to taste

Roast dry, dal and chilli until golden brown, add asafoetida, roast sesame until desiccated. Add to dal, add salt and cool, coarse grind and mix with ghee for use. Roasted garlic may be added

Add jaggary for a sweet form.

Food matters



by Neil Amor

Nimbin Organic Food Co-op is going for gold this year for the window display, leading up to the Nimbin Show on Saturday 23rd to Sunday 24th September. Check it out in the coming weeks.

It's membership time in October for the Co-op, and to make it even more inviting to renew and join we are now giving our membership discount on all items, including milk and fresh bread. So now's the time to show your support for this vital community food source.

This month's food mythology concerns that delicious and nutritious dairy product, cheese.

Ancient Greek mythology credited Aristaeus with the discovery of cheese. Aristaeus, in Greek mythology, was a minor god, protector and creator of various arts, such as cheese making and bee keeping. When Aristaeus was born, he was taken by Hermes who fed him nectar and ambrosia, while Gaea gave him immortality. The nymphs taught him how to make cheese, bee keeping, and many other crafts. He later passed on this knowledge to humanity.

Homer's *Odyssey* (late 8th century BC) describes the Cyclops producing and storing sheep's and goat's milk and cheese. However, the production of cheese predates recorded history. It originated through the transportation of milk in bladders made of ruminants' stomachs due to their inherent supply of rennet.

There is no conclusive evidence indicating where cheese-making originated, but by Roman times cheese-making was a mature art and common food group.

Jenny's ricotta almond & lemon cake

A light and moist cake that utilises the easy to make cheese, ricotta.

Ingredients

250g organic butter
250g organic sugar
6 organic pastured eggs, separated
250g pesticide free or organic almonds, roasted and ground
75g SR flour (unbleached white spelt with a pinch of baking powder, aluminium-free)
pinch of salt
finely grated zest of organic lemons
400g fresh ricotta

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C. Butter a 25cm round spring form cake tin. Beat the butter and sugar in an electric mixer until light and fluffy. With the motor running, add the egg yolks, one at a time, until all are incorporated.

Combine the ground almonds with the flour, salt and lemon zest. Fold into the batter.

Whisk the lemon juice with ricotta until light and airy. Fold into the cake batter.

Beat the egg whites. Fold them carefully into the batter.

Pour the batter into the prepared cake tin and bake for 50 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting a skewer into the cake. It should come out clean when cooked through.

Remove the cake from the oven and turn it out onto a cake rack to cool. It will remain nice and moist for days. It is a delicious dessert or afternoon tea cake.

Homemade ricotta

Makes about 100g

Ingredients

1 litre full cream milk
20ml apple cider vinegar

Method

Heat the milk to 93°C, stirring the whole time. Turn heat off.

Add the vinegar to the milk and stir gently. The curd will separate from the whey. Use a colander lined with muslin to strain the curds and whey. It can be stored in the fridge for a few days or used immediately.

Until next month, eat well.

A chocolate journey

The Nimbin Farmer's Market has a fantastic array of fine foods from local growers and producers. This edition we meet Julie Crisp from Nimbin Lovebites whose motto is 'Health By Chocolate'.

How did you get started?

A couple of years ago I set myself the challenge of re-creating something that everyone loves (chocolate) and replacing the unhealthy parts with healthy alternatives without compromising taste. Using organic ingredients; raw Cacao and Medjool dates instead of sugar, my creation tasted amazing... so delicious yet full of nutrition which is usually lost with heat, sugar and dairy.

Did you know raw cacao is the highest source of magnesium and chromium of ANY food? Full of vitamins and minerals and containing a cocktail of 'Bliss' chemicals, which increase our endorphins and serotonin, PEAs, released when we are in love, and anandamide, released when we are happy.

I started playing with flavours from my garden and locally produced bushfoods and essential oils (fingerlimes, pecans, aniseed and lemon myrtle, for instance, all incredible with the dark, richness of chocolate)... and so began my journey into chocolate alchemy and adoration for this incredible food!

What are you selling now?

Anything I can put cacao in! With avocados from our trees I make a delicious Nimbin-alternative to Nutella. Mine is a creamy, delicious chocolate spread full of nutrition with honey from Alan at the market, and local macadamias... a healthy addition of superfoods!

Sometimes I have chocolate mole, a Mexican savoury chocolate chilli paste, which is superb with roast veggies. I'm always looking for new ideas!

Cacao butter not only smells divine but has many healing and protective properties for the skin too Apart from food, I make several chocolate body butters; for dry winter skin, for soothing summer skin and a natural lubricant too! And then there is Choc-o-block Natural Sun Protection.

I am fair-skinned and like many, concerned about Big Pharma's chemicals and poisons, choosing not to use sunscreens in the past to my detriment. I thought of developing a natural



sun protection using my body butter as a base with Zinc Oxide (not nano-particles), which is known to be safe, stable in sunlight and provides greater protection from UV-A rays than any other approved sunscreen chemical.

The zinc is supported by other oils for sun protection and anti-oxidant properties and beeswax for waterproofing. Zinc is also an essential element for skin repair so Choc-o-block has another life as a skin healer (think zinc cream and nappy rash!) I have had great feedback on this product. Check out my Facebook page: *Nimbin Lovebites* for full info.

Apart from health, what other concerns does Nimbin Lovebites try to address?

Packaging. I try hard to ensure my packaging is either re-usable or compostable, rather than recyclable. For instance, my chocolates are available in tins for refill at the Market or in compostable, natural materials. Body products are in reusable tins.

What's coming up next for Nimbin Lovebites?

Always developing new flavours and ideas... I am also in the middle of website-building right now so I can take my products to the world. At the moment I only sell in Nimbin; when not at the market, chocolates can be found at the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op, Nimbin Emporium, Armonica, Phoenix Rising and Sphinx Rock Cafe. Body products are available at the Co-op, the Emporium, Green Bank, Craft Gallery and Enviro Centre.

Thank you, Nimbin, for your love and support in keeping it healthy.

My tour of Vietnam

by Robin Stein

Thank you for the positive comments regarding the article last month about my time in Vietnam during the worst of the war. You requested it. So, two more stories from my time there.

After working with the fabulous five-piece Korean band for three months, they returned home. A young four-piece Philipino band took their place. The four boys were only 15 and 16 years of age and they spoke little English. They couldn't read a note of music, but it made no difference because they could play any song in any key. No dancers this time, just the boys and me. I sang mostly Aretha Franklin songs and the troops loved us.

We performed three shows in the Chinese sector of Long Bin, one hour out of Saigon. There was always a show for the enlisted men, another for the petty officers and a third for the officers. We were returning to Saigon in pitch blackness at the end of a very long military convoy when we were hit by snipers. The noise was deafening and we could see tracers lighting up the crossfire.

Suddenly spirit spoke to me. The firing would heat up and we were no longer safe. I had to get my band out of our Kombi-van, then drag ourselves away from the passenger side of the Kombi on our bellies, heads down. Eventually we'd find a dried creek bed where we'd be safe to hide. The boys were absolutely terrified. They were saying their rosaries



and refused to leave the imagined safety of the van. But I knew our van, containing all our instruments, was unsafe. And if spirit told me to leave the van, there was a serious risk it would be hit. So I dragged each of them away, screaming blue murder. Fortunately they were not heard in the massive shooting noise. We dragged ourselves forward on our bellies and fell into the dried creek bed I was told we'd find.

After an eternity, the shooting stopped and we heard army personnel calling along the convoy line to check

if everyone was okay. All hell broke loose when they reached our Kombi. It was totally riddled with holes and they thought we were dead. We would not have survived had we remained in the van and we felt incredibly grateful.

In 1969 I flew home to collect a five piece Aussie band. We were called 'The Surf Riders' and we were very popular with go-go dancer Lisa and her long, blonde hair. We performed only soul music.

The boys in the band asked about the Indigenous people of Vietnam, so I took them on the long walk up the mountain to meet the Montagnard people who welcomed us with ceremony. We sat in an enormous circle while a gourd of home made alcohol was passed around. I told the boys clearly that it may not actually be drinkable. It could contain human or animal liquids. But they didn't care and simply went for it. The alcohol was also extremely strong and within an hour, the boys were all sound asleep on the ground. Efforts to wake them failed and I was forced to let the organisers know. They were not happy. The boys slept without waking for 48 hours and we missed two shows!

I loved the stunningly gorgeous country. And fell in love with the beautiful Vietnamese people, with whom I chose to live. One day, I hope to return. However, I also know that the country will never recover from the relentless US poisoning. And to this day sadly, babies are still being born with horrific deformities.

robinstein@gmail.com

Chronological age and Bowen therapy

Last night I finally finished writing my first book. Whether it be published or not, the feeling of satisfaction and joy was unique to me, because this piece of imagination came from me and therefore is wholly mine.

Of course I had help along the way, as is fitting in a perfect world where each of us with our own particular skills has the potential to improve the skills of others. And because I live where I live, tapping into brilliance was relatively easy. The Northern Rivers abounds with clever, kind people.

It has been a long haul, learning to write a book without the assistance of professional know how, but I am grateful that in my latter years I have been able to do something that twenty years ago would have been beyond me.

I must admit it took a long time to let go and truly appreciate the skills of the computer. Today I'd still be classified as a techno dinosaur, but doubt I would have been able to write 76000 words without the puter. My respect for authors who write by hand has lifted considerably.

So where is this egocentric little rave leading to for those, who like me, are looking at the rich red wine of what we've become? And apparently, there are quite a few of us these days.

What does one do when the kids have become adults and live their own lives somewhere else, the hip hop moves have deteriorated due to recalcitrant aches and pain and staying up till dawn has lost its edge?

Recently I went to the funeral of a great man. The part that I will remember was a story from his great granddaughter about a love he lost and then regained many years later. It told me things about him that I never would have known otherwise.

So often we leave this mortal coil with secrets about ourselves that those who care about us will never know. Often, it's because we think, who would be interested? Or, I couldn't divulge that. I was sooo naughty.

From my experience, stories about our adventures of life can be extremely interesting to those who follow behind us, particularly the naughty adventures. There are a few I've heard about my relatives that made me laugh and also cry and assisted me in knowing why I am as I am.

So you may not want to write a book, but know that no matter what you have done in life, whether you think you have won or failed, there are others who will find the history of your life most exciting and even helpful.



by Tonia Haynes

I have a friend who writes the personal history of those in their latter years. Sometimes it is just a record of the events of their lives. Other times they share their hearts.

Personally I think all of us need to leave something precious that came from ourselves, accompanied by something written that exposes our inner most hearts. Believe me, it will be greatly appreciated.

I still have my mother's very badly embroidered table cloth and on the evening of her funeral I sat with her best friend since school days who divulged all. Considering they both celebrated young adulthood in New Zealand during the Second World War, the stories were delightfully shocking.

That table cloth and the memories of those stories are

some of my most precious possessions.

As to those recalcitrant aches and pains? Bowen Therapy can relieve and even eliminate many discomforts in the back, neck, shoulders and limbs.

I recently had an experience where the right side of my back went into spasm to the point that I was moaning at regular intervals like a sick cow. After two days of moaning and hobbling I finally found the courage to give myself a treatment. A most non-nurturing experience that involved me, a door jam, a wooden spoon and a pair of tongs.

After the first teeth gritting treatment with no one nearby to hold my head or hand the spasms stopped. Next day I gave myself another treatment and also readjusted a rib by twisting the bod into some most unwelcome contortions. I went to bed feeling unloved and sore.

I woke up the next day pain free.

Quite frankly, I was a bit amazed. I always knew the Bowen was good, but was under the illusion it worked on others because of my loving hands, listening ear and the other types of bodywork I add to a treatment.

Apparently it can work all by itself.

Love light and giggles.

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POSITION VACANT

Nimbin Market Co-ordinator

The Nimbin Community Centre is seeking a reliable Co-ordinator to manage the Nimbin Markets, which runs on the 4th and 5th Sunday of each month.



Co-ordinating the market is an independent undertaking with the potential to generate income. The role of market co-ordinator will suit someone who has well-developed skills in management and leadership, and enjoys working independently.

The co-ordinator is responsible for all aspects of the market including:

- Bookings
- Collecting stall fees
- Opening up gates early morning
- Leaving grounds tidy and locking gate at end of the day
- Managing the stage music including PA hire
- Responsible for payment of costs to Nimbin Community Centre (grounds hire, bins, electricity)

Nimbin Community Centre supports the running of the market and the coordinator by arranging the DA and insurance, emptying bins and maintaining the grounds and stage.

For more information, please contact the Nimbin Community Centre, phone: (02) 6689-0000, email: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au

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One year seed, seven years weed

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

One year seed, seven years weed. Or more! Lengthy seed viability ensures the survival of a plant species. Some seeds can survive for hundreds, if not thousands, of years under suitable storage conditions.

Russian scientists reported they successfully propagated a flowering plant from seeds found in Siberia. Carbon dated to 32,000 years, the seeds, buried by an Ice Age squirrel, were discovered 38 metres deep in the permafrost.

Low temperatures are ideal for storing seeds as demonstrated by the choice of site for the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. It stores seeds at a chilly -18°C. The Norwegian vault is 100 metres deep in a frozen mountain with the expectation the seeds will remain perpetually frozen in the permafrost, preserving them if required for future generations.

Dry conditions or low humidity also promote seed longevity. A date palm was grown from a 2000 year old seed excavated from an archaeological site near the Dead Sea.

Many weed species have



Giant Devil's Fig

seeds that can last decades in the soil, waiting for ideal conditions to germinate. Weeds will be with us forever. Their numbers and impact, however, can be reduced with careful thought and considered land management.

Weed seed can arrive on your property by way of you. Stock feed and landscaping supplies such as soil or mulch can easily be contaminated. Beware cheap bales of hay. Ask where they come from and what weeds they might carry to avoid introducing new species. Sometimes a weed can be introduced by buying a pretty new plant for the garden.

Knowing which plants are also weeds can be difficult. Some species are promoted by popular television shows and readily available from plant nurseries or via the internet. Yet they feature

on a list of high priority weeds. That is, scientists have determined this species is one to preclude.

Chinese Tallow tree, *Triadica sebifera*, (AKA *Sapium sebiferum*) is such a plant. Cultivated widely as street tree in SE QLD and Northern NSW, it is a fast growing deciduous ornamental. However it is prone to suckering and can quickly form a dense grove. Able to grow in full sun or part shade, a single tree can produce one hundred thousand seeds. These can be carried by birds to new locations. Tallow tree changes soil chemistry excluding other species, so it has potential to displace native vegetation. It likes moist areas such as creek banks and swamps but can also be found on roadsides in harsher drier zones. Another super hardy species, it will

survive drought as well as prolonged inundation. Tallow tree resists attempts to eradicate and will reshoot after cutting and burning.

As the weather warms and hopefully more rain arrives, be prepared for new weeds. Giant devil fig continues to spread. If you don't have it now, expect it sometime soon, anywhere in the Nimbin Valley and beyond. Mature flowering specimens were recently spied while driving through a suburb of south-east Brisbane. A couple of them were growing merrily in an abandoned nursery (awaiting real-estate development) and another two on the creek bank beside the road.

Get GDF while it is small! This is another persistent woody weed prone to suckering and difficult to eradicate. Broken roots left behind will reshoot as will branches and stems laying on the ground. Don't let it reproduce. If you already have an intractable grove, as many do, at the very least cut down the trees before they develop seed. Remove, bag and destroy any fruit to reduce the proliferation of yet more of this vigorous spiky invader. The birds have plenty of other food. They won't miss this one.

Happy weeding.

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Monoculture as a stage of developmental growth

by Geoff Dawe

The degradation of natural systems is noticed enough by some of the population to wish to do something about it.

It mostly translates as feverish activity in bush regeneration in an attempt to act as a bulwark against land clearing and, in terms of environmental and social influences, the inefficient, mechanised land use activity of current food supply.

Nevertheless, bush regeneration is competing with the cleared-land-need of mechanised food supply. However, much bush regeneration has an idealised heart; it cannot hope to offset the need of the population to eat and clothe itself.

Moreover, the land degradation caused by industrial agriculture causes many bush regenerators, in their love of diversity, to respond with hatred of monoculture.

When nature is "down on its back legs", soil is often threatened. Reduced number of species but nevertheless efficient species in terms of securing soil with bulk biomass, is often the response of nature. It makes no more sense to eradicate these species than to attempt to get rid of a new plant species that appears in a desert area. The response from humans can always be to add further species rather than take away existing species that nature has provided.

Despite the fears of humans that they might be overriding nature by importing exotic species, nature is not overridden when it "green lights" species by causing them to thrive. "New" ecosystems are being created



Image courtesy: Sciencedaily.com

that are necessary to offset severe land degradation. Soil is being tended first, and, incidentally with that, water and air; the three bases of life. Nature does this with species able to do the job most efficiently, not because they are specifically native or exotic.

Hatred of anything is always a problem in the sense it is not in accord with the wellbeing of the whole. Hatred of monoculture in natural systems can be seen to occur at a deeper psychological level, of hatred of one's own attachment to a mechanised, monoculture food supply that is the root cause of habitat loss. Social psychologist Donald Michael says, "We choose our social causes in terms of our psychological needs."

Industrial agriculture encourages pest and disease problems because it is monocultural; a major part of its unsustainability is that mechanisation dependence discourages diversity.

Humans overcome habitat loss using land more efficiently in terms of food supply, by each individual supplying themselves as they primarily did before the Neolithic Revolution; this time by gardening.

For what it is worth, the 19th century philosopher and poet William Blake,

who was witness to the negative social effects of the birth pangs of the Industrial Revolution, felt that the real vocation of humans was as gardeners. Attempts by individuals to supply their own food, at a physical, practical level, are the foundations of both sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

The monoculture of action of a human achieving its own food supply can then diversify to co-opt with other humans to make more efficient the combined labour use. Parts combine with greater efficiencies than the sum of the parts. This is holism.

Holism is defined as the tendency of nature to create wholes. In combining with other humans, there is merely the reflection of the advantages of diversity in natural systems. Both systems: humans rolling back habitat loss by each individual supplying itself with food, and nature rolling back land degradation, have as their basis monoculture evolving to diversity.

Monoculture of action is not maladjustment in initiating activity to move beyond monoculture. It is merely a stage of growth; both in the microcosm of the human and the macrocosm of nature.

Back from the brink

Natural history is littered with accounts of nature's abundance: from the pods of Beluga whales and narwhals which drifted past the astonished collective gaze of early Norwegian whaling fleets, to the fat orgy of sun-bathing seals on Macquarie island, and the waddling opulence of muttonbirds, gulls and salmon. "There was no end to them," wrote sealers and birders and whalers, all of whom would soon make such an end to them beyond even their own expectations. Where rifles and harpoons travelled, so followed extinction. And if these hunters did not send species extinct, they brought them to the very brink.

It's a pattern which echoes that of my own lifetime: I have written previously about the busy days of monarch butterflies, pipis and standing *Dicksonias* which crowded my childhood. I know it's not just adulthood which has thrown up a great silence where there was once song. Something bigger is going on: something which has us inventing tiny drones to pollinate flowers,



by Anastasia Guise

and lamenting the lack of bugs on our windscreens. We know we are inarguably in the middle of a great extinction event; one that coincides with our entry into the Anthropocene.

But within this depressing narrative, there are signs of nature's resilience. The story of the night parrot (pictured) is the biggest comeback movie of Australia's recent natural history. This nocturnal, mostly ground-dwelling parrot, was first described by Europeans in 1845 in northern South Australia, but disturbance of habitat,

and predation by cats and foxes was thought to have driven it to extinction soon afterwards. By 1912, it was declared extinct, until in 1990 - almost eighty years later - a dead parrot was found by the side of a road in outback Queensland. Another dead specimen was spotted in 2006. Then, in 2013, a live parrot was photographed in deep spinifex country in western Queensland, precipitating the rediscovery of a small population of possibly 300 individuals. Once it was known that a population had survived, focused efforts by bird enthusiasts found more populations in Western Australia, and possibly the Tanami desert in the Northern Territory.

The resilience of the night parrot is testimony to the fact that species can persist despite enormous disruption to their ecosystems. They embody the hope that, despite near-extinction, recovery is possible.

The recovery of whale populations is seemingly another resounding success story. The Humpback whale,



for example, has made a strong comeback despite a loss of perhaps 90% of its original population. The southern hemisphere populations of the Blue Whale and Southern Right Whale were plundered mercilessly from an estimated population of 200,000 and between 55,000 and 70,000 respectively, to just 300 individuals. The remaining New Zealand population of the Southern Right Whale may have included just 20 mature females. These populations have recovered very slowly, with just a few thousand individuals today, after four decades of almost

complete protection.

Not all species recover from habitat disruption, or a significant loss in population numbers, in the same way, if at all. No doubt this is a reflection of their life history characteristics, genetic diversity, dependence on other species (such as specific pollinators) and many other factors. The reduced genetic diversity in a population driven to near-extinction is called by scientists a "genetic bottleneck", and further complicates the recovery of such species. When it comes to resistance to disease, and adaptation to climate change, genetic diversity for any

species is key.

Our greatest arrogance, perhaps, is that we depend on each and every other species for our own survival. Some have only an imperceptible impact on "our" world - others we would perish without. But we are all diminished by the loss of species, like people in a room being rapidly emptied. Pretty soon, we'll realise we're the last man standing, the room is empty, and the party is over.

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

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

Last month I mentioned the good news that Ballina Shire Council's Koala Management Strategy had been approved by the NSW Department of Planning. The Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) incorporated into the Strategy is the sixth to have been prepared in accordance with State Environmental Planning Policy No 44 - Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44).

In anyone's book a mere half dozen approved CKPoMs (Lismore's was the fourth) in 22 years is not much to show - a sad indictment of NSW's meagre political appetite for landscape-scale protection of koala habitat on private land. In our region, Tweed and Byron Councils have also prepared CKPoMs for their coastal areas but neither has been endorsed by the Department.

SEPP 44's purpose is to provide additional protection for koalas and their habitat by ensuring they are taken into account in the assessment process for any proposed Development Application lodged with a listed council. It was to be an important component of koala conservation and recovery actions on private lands in NSW. After all, most of the State's koala habitat is on privately-owned land.

Because of the significant overlap between urban development and the areas of highest importance to koalas, SEPP 44 is particularly important in coastal lowland areas of the Northern Rivers. However, its effectiveness in stemming the decline in koala numbers has been undermined by unaddressed



structural inadequacies including the dominance over the SEPP of Private Native Forestry and Routine Agricultural Maintenance Activities; lack of absolute protections; processes that facilitate major projects; inappropriate biodiversity offsetting policies and other shortcomings which have prevented it from achieving anything like its potential. With no published evaluation of the SEPP's effectiveness and of the protections afforded by the few approved CKPoMs, the Government's announcement of a review towards the end of 2016, albeit narrow in focus and in the context of delivering 'a simpler and more modern planning system', was generally welcomed.

Hampered by the lack of detail in the Explanation of Intended Effect of the amendments proposed, submissions were duly lodged, but with the release of the Chief Scientist & Engineer's Report of the Independent Review into the Decline of Koala Populations in Key

Areas of NSW and its recommendations underpinning a whole-of-government approach to koala recovery, the deadline was extended to March 2017.

The Report certainly acknowledged the review's limited nature, so perhaps extension was warranted. Frustratingly though, nothing has been heard on either the review or the so-called Koala Strategy since March. In the meantime, the alarming 'reform package' of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and Local Land Services Amendment Act 2016 together with their Regulations, came into force on 25th August 2017.

Largely 'self-regulatory' NSW's laws are full of loop-holes that the unscrupulous will use to embark upon, even continue in some cases, broad-scale land-clearing at the expense of wildlife habitat. Not that they are an 'out west' problem. The new laws will have detrimental repercussions east of The Great Divide as well. On top of that, in the absence of transition arrangements between the old and new laws we can expect local government officers and their state colleagues to be puzzling over the finer points of applying the poorly understood Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM), etc. for some months, if not years to come.

It has to be said that protection of koala habitat under the Native Vegetation Act was far from perfect. But it was better than what will be delivered by the new regime of code-based clearing and offsets. The Chief Scientist & Engineer recognised that and made some modest recommendations for improvements (e.g. ensuring that koala habitat



maps are suitable for use in the new system and including koalas in the monitoring programs to be established) to the draft Regulations.

Disappointingly, exhibition of the Regulations and Codes in mid-year revealed little uptake of her recommendations apart from designating 'core koala habitat' defined as land identified as koala habitat in a Plan of Management approved under SEPP 44 to Category 2-regulated land. With only six approved SEPP-compliant CKPoMs in place, it must be obvious that only an extremely small area of the State, less than 3,000ha along the Eastern seaboard is mapped core koala habitat fitting that criteria. The vast majority of 'core koala habitat' throughout NSW remains unidentified and unprotected.

The impasse presented by the new laws relying on this definition and the SEPP bogged down in review with no foreseeable outcome, (and therefore no funding incentive pathway to local government) is disturbing enough but the new legislation presents other problems for koalas. Most notable is its reliance on an extended offsetting scheme which encompasses the habitat of other threatened species

and even cash. At best, offsets almost always mean sacrificing one koala population for another. Koalas have relatively fixed home ranges, thus habitat loss through vegetation clearance means koalas using that area, are impacted. Retaining some habitat (often suboptimal), planting trees (that take years before use), and acquiring habitat nowhere near their home range will be detrimental to that population's survival. Moving away from 'like to like' is totally unacceptable for koalas.

Rather than an opportunity to improve protections, the land-use planning and biodiversity reforms are a dog's breakfast that will certainly fail our koalas. Little wonder that community volunteers including members of Friends of the Koala, who spend day-in, day-out rescuing and rehabilitating these beautiful animals and advocating for their survival, are so cynical of Government's commitment.

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 or use our new online sighting tool at: www.friendsofthekoala.org

The website also provides information about koalas, their food trees, how you can assist koala conservation, and a whole lot more.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting
(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.

The five sheaths of every human being

by Cameron Storey

The theory of the Pancha Koshas or five sheaths is seen in the Ananda Valli, which is itself from the second chapter of the 6th century Sanskrit text called the *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

The Ananda Valli asserts that knowing one's highest Self leads to internal freedom from identifying as the physical, energy and mental realms. According to the Ananda Valli, there are five layers of every human being and five levels of knowledge to be attained.

1. Annamaya Kosha: Food Body Sheath

The first sheath concerns the physical body, our material nature, which is likened to a food body.

All creatures grow and are sustained by the varieties of "elemental foods" from this earth: solids/earth, liquids/water, gases/air and sunshine/fire without any one of which we would all die and/or become food for something else but this food body is just the outermost shell of our existence. Learning, knowing

and understanding this food chain material nature of existence is the first essential interdependent aspect.

This layer includes all major body systems: Skeletal, muscular, nervous, endocrine, lymphatic, digestive, respiratory, urinary, circulatory, integumentary, and reproductive. Hatha yoga is the science of mastering the physical body and all its accompanying systems.

2. Pranamaya Kosha: Energy Body Sheath

This second layer is composed of prana/chi/ki or energy and moves primarily through the breath along a system of channels called nadis or meridians. While there is breath there is life. The science of Pranayama is the science of mastering this body.

As this kosha is more subtle than the first kosha we need to use more wisdom and patience lest we burn out our nervous system and further weaken the physical body. There are many cautions in classical Hatha Yoga literature about this point. When prana is blocked or stagnant disease can occur.

"One who has knowledge of Self is full of bliss, exists in peace within and without, is in a state of calm joy irrespective of circumstances, is one with everything and everyone, fears nothing, fears no one, lives in true nature, is free from pride, is free from guilt, is beyond good and evil, is free from craving desires and thus all the universe is the Self." – Taittiriya Upanishad

3. Manomaya Kosha: Mind Sheath

The third, subtler layer, is composed of the contents of the psycho-emotional body including the sense of identity, social roles, personality, cravings, aversions, memories of the past, imagination based on the past, anger, hatred, jealousy, lust, etc.

This content arising is what is observed when students first begin to meditate and find frustrating, it's also what is in constant regurgitating motion throughout people's waking day unless they are numbed down with self-medication. The science of concentration is the method

for transcending most of the mental and emotional content.

4. Vijnanamaya Kosha: Wisdom Sheath

The fourth layer, more subtle again, is composed of the intelligence of discrimination which discerns between that which leads toward addiction and attachment or freedom and detachment (but not apathy), outwards into the world and inwards toward one's deepest nature.

This layer, like the previous ones, is subject to change, limited and not constantly present. Awareness of our physical, emotional and mental habit patterns is the beginning of freeing ourselves for a greater and more skilful range of options. Meditation and Self-enquiry are the means to transcend this layer.

5. Anandamaya Kosha: Bliss Sheath

The fifth and most subtle layer is of the nature of Supreme Bliss and contentment. Each night in deep dreamless sleep we experience our deepest nature but forget each morning. During wakefulness although



"One thousand days of lessons for disciple; ten thousand days of lessons for mastery." – Miyamoto Musashi

this layer is always present our minds are often too distracted by the physical, emotional and mental happenings to notice our divine background.

Just as each of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) appear in corresponding subtlety among each of the five senses so too the intellect cognizes ever subtler causes and effects at play through each of the five sheaths. All the koshas, ourselves and the world around us are part of an all-encompassing unity/yoga. While the majority of people

live primarily within the first three layers not everyone will settle for Lila's purposeless purpose.

To spend a lifetime refining ourselves, ending unhealthy habits, expanding our capacity to love or communicate or serve would not be a waste. The bar set by the sages remains ever as high.

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

Good grief

by Betti Wille

Just as nurturing touch and a social collective, grief is an essential part of a human life lived in integrity. When grieving I'm expressing my love for that which doesn't last.

It's a fact that every human being, animal, plant as well as everything we have created in the material realm will deteriorate and vanish. Grief is the emotional response to loss. Expressing grief is like opening a pressure relief valve. In this way it helps me to stay sane and attuned to the flow of life.

Feelings related to loss are not easy to deal with. Even more so, as loss is likely to be regarded as failure in a society where gain and achievements are measurements for success. We all share a basic humanity though, which has its own rules and requirements. Here I am likely to be confronted with tasks I never imagined I would have to deal with.

Grief and loss are relentless companions. Rattling on my cage, they call me to look at things I'd rather avoid. But: *"Not success. Not growth. Not happiness. The cradle for our love of life is... death."* – Stephen Jenkinson

Stephen Jenkinson's quote reminds us that some events in life are so incredibly beautiful because of their ephemeral nature. A flower may wilt within hours. Even a human life is just a dash within the big picture of things. The very fact that it ends reminds us to enjoy it thoroughly while it lasts and not spoil it by holding onto grudges or

resentments.

Our western society has either lost or not yet widely established a creative and resourceful culture to deal with inevitable grief. We're still very much learning how to do this.

Thus people often feel left alone with their grief. We feel insecure and don't know how to be with someone who is deeply grieving. One reason for this might be fear to meet our own grief. Sitting right inside of us, it is waiting to remind us of our vulnerable spots which are part of our basic human nature.

In the company of someone with outbreaks of grief we're tempted to offer some kind of fix like, "Everything is going to be all right". But is that so?

Wouldn't it be better to just listen? Genuine listening can be learned and is one of the greatest gifts a human being has to offer in times of crisis.

Grief has many faces, tastes and colours. Loss brings up a wide range of reactions, whether we lose a relationship, our vitality or health, a purpose or role or anything else we were attached to.

One rule within our shared basic humanity is that suppressed feelings grow in intensity. Only through their expression are we able to let go and move forward.

Grief may express itself as shock, depression, sickness, aggression, guilt, denial, fear, confusion, mental agitation or numbness, just to name a few. Males grieve differently from females. The only general rule is that it is as individual as our personalities.

We tend to think that grief has



to be overcome but it is here to be experienced. Time in itself doesn't heal, but expression of grief does. Whether it's speaking when someone truly listens, through meditation, walking, other kinds of exercise or using creativity, expressing my feelings is the most helpful in the long run. Someone may just sit with me, joining in with my breathing rhythm. If I'm not ready to speak yet, I can find simple expression of feelings within my breath.

Nimbin's community group 'Nimbin Death and Beyond' is forming a grief support group to provide a safe place for grief to be shared. The first meeting will be held on Saturday 30th September, 3pm at the Bottlebrush Studio, the rainbow coloured building next to the Nimbin market grounds, home of Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services. At this point a psychologist, a counsellor and support worker are willing to volunteer their time to hold that special space. Everyone welcome.

For further enquiries, contact Betti on 0490-292-138 or at: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com or join us on facebook for more info and further events.

A temporary discomfort

by David Ward

There exists that brief lapse in cognition once our drug effect has subsided, the foreign substances having temporarily displaced our natural brain chemicals. This is the momentary nature of our addiction.

In that moment we can either respond by taking another dose, setting ourselves up for a potentially permanent job. Or we can simply sit tight, and wait for things to settle down, for our neurotransmitters to replenish themselves and come back on line. We can even get actively involved in the process, doing some yoga, having some human contact or eating an apple and drinking a glass of water, anything to break that state and give our brains a chance to re-compose themselves.

In addiction we learn to get in early, to play it safe, dosing ourselves well before the effects of the last cigarette or whatever has worn off. Any sense of pleasure associated with our particular substances becomes drastically minimised once those effects become our new normality.

If we become addicted to our drugs and the corresponding neurochemistry that they create, it stands to reason that we can also become re-addicted to life without drugs. The adventures of experimenting with drugs give way to the alternate adventures of life without drugs, a place of infinitely more possibilities and energy.

The brain environment required for this desirable state to flourish can be fine tuned through attention



to our basic human needs, our nutrition, our sleep, our support networks and our daily practices such as yoga, meditation, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, weights or any other form of exercise.

Giving in to the urge to indulge habitually means overriding our intuition. As doubt develops around following our intuition in general, things can quickly get beyond our control. We get so many clues in the form of negative impacts, but with our intuition and survival instinct offline we are seemingly powerless to put two and two together.

Intuition and neurochemistry appear to be intertwined. When we mess with our neurotransmitters on a daily basis we interfere with the accessibility of that intuition, compromising our whole belief system.

Substances and the neurochemical environment they create start to govern our thinking and we can easily be convinced that life is unviable without such supports.

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

Observations from a sidewalk cafe

by Les Rees, Equine Naturopath

Sitting outside on a sidewalk café, I've chosen a shady spot to watch the world go by. It's one of my favourite haunts amidst the laid back casualness of Nimbin life. Anything can happen here, there are buskers ranging from kids to adults, playing music, some good and some not so good; tarot readers secrete themselves at tables bedecked with cards and crystals discretely set for two, and animated conversations strike up between friends as tourists wander past intrigued by the colour of life in Nimbin.

It always amazes me when I see someone who is apparently deep in conversation with an invisible person... I sit down and see him immediately, he's sitting on a step opposite my table and I'm transfixed. Like the passers-by, I try not to look, but it's so engaging; the imaginary friend seems completely real to him but invisible to me.

Yet the man's reactions and emotions seem as if his friend is actually present and I wonder if it's maybe me who's in a parallel universe. They laugh at shared jokes and have conversations of which I only hear half and when an interested passer-by notices



him, he wanders past twice pretending to be looking at his phone.

The second time he traverses the pavement to get closer, I suspect that he's taking photos or a video of this interesting man. The funny thing is that the guy notices him and rolls his eyes to his imaginary friend and laughs. This is absolutely fascinating.

I hear you say that it's just another druggie, but to me it's another human being that's chosen a way not to feel lonely, who's given up caring about what other people think. Maybe he has a point!

My analytical mind drifts to wondering whether this happens with other social animals living alone. There are plenty of examples of unusual and devoted friendships

between different species who have found creative ways of stemming loneliness.

Take Bernard for example, he was a bull living next door to us who had wandered down from the hillside away from the rest of his herd and didn't seem to want to go back. I suspect that he was pretty shrewd, escaping the inevitable by hiding out but it was a lonely life for him.

He cried out when the other cattle were nearby and when they weren't, he chattered to himself. Our horses often hung out with him over the fence offering him a temporary place amongst their herd.

Bernard roamed back and forth visiting his animal mates trespassing on the farms along our road for a couple of years before he was found out, and

I have to say that I missed seeing him around!

I'm always saddened when I see horses living in solitary confinement that have developed habitual behaviour patterns born out of loneliness. Being social beings, they have their own hierarchical structure that provides a code of acceptable behaviours and offers mutual protection from threatening situations.

This goes some way to explaining why horses living in isolation can become extremely stressed. It can cause both psychological and physiological issues often becoming aggressive in nature and having significant effects on their relationships with humans. As a result they are often sold on to the next unsuspecting person and can live a life of misery as they are passed on to more and more homes.

Unfortunately, there are few people who have the skills needed to rehabilitate horses that have shut down and it has become common to find horses on death row in the knacker's yard!

Working with rescue horses, it was surprising how many phone calls we received from these places asking if it would be possible to take them in for rehabilitation. At least these places had a conscience.

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Preparation and confidence building

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

This heading sounds a bit like a topic for a conference, not the horse paddock. But it's a very important subject to be aware of when working with horses.

A confident human is one who feels solid in the world; they have a good idea of where they are and what's coming up, within a flexible framework. The same goes for a horse, in order to feel confident they need to understand and accept what is currently happening and be fully prepared for upcoming events.

Frequently when I'm out and about working with horses and their humans I witness situations where the horse has not been prepared for what the human asks of it. In this situation the horse can become frightened or resistant and develop a negative headspace about the task. This can all be avoided by preparing the horse, both on the micro and the macro scale.

For example, on the micro scale, if we are riding and ask our horse to turn we may find they are slow to respond, do a poor turn and we have to be stronger with the rein aid than we would like.

Alternatively, if we started preparing the horse four or five metres before the turn by applying half halts with the inside rein (small squeezes) and turn our own heads and bodies slightly in the new direction of travel, then the horse knows what is coming mentally and is already changing their balance slightly when you give the actual

turning aids, resulting in a smooth confident turn with minimal rein aids.

The same goes for upward and downward transitions, letting your horse know what's coming next helps them to prepare their minds and bodies and results in a much better connection between horse and rider. And the best thing is that if you ride this way, preparing your horse before asking anything from it, then your aids can be reduced significantly.

This is the goal of all good horse riders, to use as little pressure as possible while getting the biggest response possible from the horse. As I'm always saying, less is more. The less aids you apply, the more your horse will give you. As you become an almost invisible rider, the smallest movement by you becomes a cue for your horse.

Macro situations also require preparation. Recently someone told me a story of a girl who took out a horse that hadn't been ridden for many months away from his herd, through scrubby lantana and into an open paddock where she cantered him. He promptly bolted, resulting in her coming off. She sold the horse because he was too 'difficult'. The horse could have been better prepared for this experience. Here are some ideas on how this horse could have been better prepared.

A horse is good at what a horse is doing, so if a horse is eating grass that's what they're good at. If the horse has been spelling, preparing them for riding is necessary for the horse's confidence and for rider safety. Doing groundwork



exercises rebuilds the connection between horse and human. Then the first few rides should be at home and in a small enclosed area before going into a large area. Then the horse needs to feel confident with the human to leave the herd and if 'herd-bound' needs to be slowly introduced to the idea of going out into the world alone.

Gradually stretching how far you leave the herd prepares the horse for being away from the herd and builds confidence in you. It's also a good idea to go slow the first few rides, gradually introducing the faster gaits when your horse is mentally and physically prepared.

Taking the time to prepare your horse for what you are going to ask actually means you'll get there faster. Trying to rush things with horses never works. Preparing your horse for everything you do will result in a happy, self-confident and willing partner.

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