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Blue Knob Hall Gallery



'View from Tweed Gallery' by Rodney Brown

The current exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is 'The Artist's Choice'. This is an exhibition that is not themed, and artists could choose to bring any work they wanted to show, which always gives a different feeling to this annual exhibition.

It makes for an eclectic exhibition with ceramics from some of the Blue Knob Ceramic Studio potters, paintings, photographs, fabric and fibre. The exhibition runs through to 4th February.

The Gallery, Café and Ceramic Studio will re-open on Thursday 11th January, after a well-earned break for

the wonderful volunteers who keep the Gallery, Cafe and Ceramic Studio going.

The Gallery and Cafe will be open on Saturday 6th January for the Blue Knob Farmers Market that day. From Thursday 11th January, the opening hours for the Gallery & Cafe will be as usual: Thursday 10am - 4pm, Friday 10am - 2pm, Saturday 8.30am - 2pm, Sunday 10am - 4pm.

There will be no Artists and Friends lunch in January.

Blue Knob Ceramic Studio
 The Ceramic Studio is fully booked



'A Question of Balance' by Heather Kimber

again for the first eight-week cycle from 11th January to 4th March.

It's been another amazing year of ceramics, and we're looking forward to doing it all again this year.

If you have any queries about the Ceramic Studio, please contact Heather at the Gallery on 6689-7449 or email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au

Nimbin Artists Gallery

The volunteers at Nimbin Artists Gallery wish you all a healthy, safe and productive 2018.

The Gallery has established a tradition showcasing art from the students of Nimbin Central School. Currently five students have art works in the foyer, displaying a range of styles and skills. One of Keisha King's pieces sold on the day it was hung.

'Artist of the Month' is our very own extremely talented Rod Johnston.

Many of you may know Rod as a sculptor of sandstone and a creator of 'one off' Steampunk inspired pieces.

Rod only recently took up the palette knife and has established his own unique style of painting.

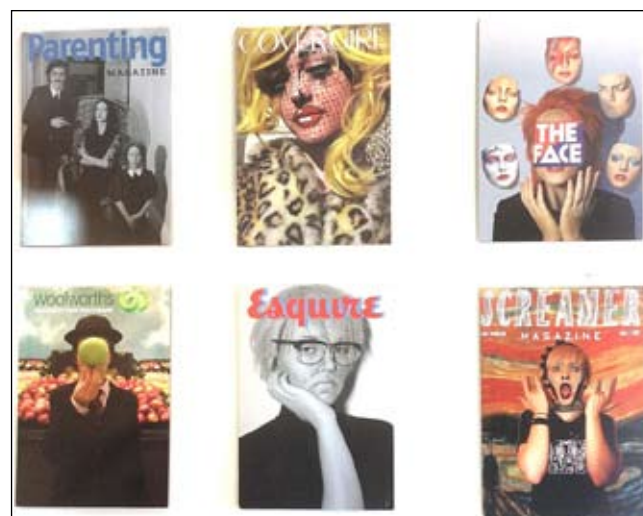
The gallery is fortunate to have all three types of Rod's art, always reasonably priced and very unique.

Artists and patrons please note this early notice about the very popular Autumn Arts Extravaganza.

This year it will occupy the whole month of April which will include Easter, school holidays and an influx of visitors from the Commonwealth Games at Gold Coast City.

If you are an artist interested in exhibiting at the AAE, contact the gallery at: nimbinartistsgallery@gmail.com

Please feel welcome to drop in any time for a browse and a chat, open daily 10am to 5pm, and check out the variety of art currently on display.



Top right: Janet Hassell

Above left: Rod Johnson

Above: Leigh Arnold

Left: Keisha King

Right: June King



Humpback whales love Sea Shepherd, and so does Gito



Gito von Schlippe is a German artist who has been living in our hills for over 30 years. His passion for wildlife has led him to exhibit paintings of endangered wildlife internationally for many years, bringing awareness to their struggle for survival.

Gito has a Diploma in Sculpture and Ceramics and is now using his skills to create large sculptures, based on his love for humpback whales.

An example of his recent work is a three-metre long sculpture of a humpback whale in Nimbin.

His vision is to create a life-size sculpture of a humpback



whale of 14-metres length, to give people an idea what this magnificent creature looks like close up, to earn respect for our marine wildlife and to raise awareness of Sea Shepherd, whose heroes are risking their lives to save these animals from extinction.



Gito's latest work is a six-foot long sculpture of 'Migaloo' the white whale, as a baby. It will be exhibited, along with his paintings, ceramics and wooden sculptures, at the Nimbin Artists Gallery throughout January and February.

Gito von Schlippe can be contacted at: gitogalaxy@gmail.com

Transformation

by Fiona McConnachie

The latest exhibition at the Serpentine Community Gallery is called 'Transformation' and has been created by Elizabeth Dowling, Jo Kelly and Kate Naylor, who are artists and art psychotherapists.

It is an exhibition to show how transformative the creative process can be in transcending life's struggles and celebrating its triumphs. 'Transformation' intends to explore our individual artistic development using art therapy, and to promote art therapy in the Northern Rivers community.

During the creative process there are changes which occur as cerebral and intuitive meet to work together for an individual's self-

expression. The cerebral has stored knowledge for problem solving, techniques which usually work to produce something predictable and acceptable in society. The intuitive is full of surprises. Unique to the individual, it may take some courage to come forward, show itself and 'speak out.'

Artists working as art therapists discover a freedom which they are delighted to encourage in their clients. This freedom can be empowering or frightening for a first-time participant; however, if you proceed it will be transformative in some way.

You will learn something about yourself and where you are psychologically at that point in time.



This transformation may be experienced in many ways – internally, liberating your own ideas and communicating their importance to the mind/brain – and externally, by expressing them to other people. Confidence in self-expression



communicated can be a gift for others to express themselves too. 'Transformation' runs from 23rd January to 5th February, with the opening on Friday 26th January. All are welcome to attend the opening of this exciting and innovative exhibition.



The artists will be conducting workshops throughout the duration of the exhibition – for more information please phone us at the Serpentine on 6621-6845. You'll find the Serpentine Community Gallery at 17a Bridge Street, North Lismore.

Honduras: presidential election reignites resistance

Story and pics by Warwick Fry

The Honduras general elections of November 26 this year were more controversial than the elections of 2013, with a remarkable lead-up. Calling the shots was an administration impervious to scandal and the consequences of blatantly questionable if not illegal actions that would normally sink a government.

Not that the political and social environment of Honduras qualifies as 'normal'. The massive increase in human rights abuses there by the government since the coup of 2009 is (or rather, should be) acknowledged internationally. Under the post-coup regime, over 40 Honduran journalists have been killed, 120 unionists and peasant leaders (the figure keeps changing), 20 lawyers, and assorted human rights workers, activists and opposition politicians. This is not to mention numerous death threats, illegal arrests, detentions, sackings of teachers, lecturers and lawyers deemed to be over-critical.

The main opposition to the incumbent, Juan Orlando Hernandez (or 'JOH' as he is colloquially known) this year is the Opposition Alliance, comprising LIBRE, PAC and PINU in a somewhat uneasy alliance. PAC, a right leaning anti-corruption party that performed well in 2013, provides the media personality Salvador Nasralla as the candidate. LIBRE, the centre-left party that evolved as the political wing of the National Resistance against the coup, has the mass support. It emerged fully fledged in an unprecedented four years as a party, capable of challenging the entrenched decades-old status-quo. The PINU is a small, somewhat idealistic Social Democrat party.



The campaign of the Alliance is based on the apparent unconstitutionality of a Honduran President seeking a second term. How JOH got around this is intriguing: by sacking and stacking the Supreme Court with his cronies, who in 2015 ruled that term limits violated the individual's right to run for office.

It is heavy irony that the coup in 2009 was confected around the myth that the then President Mel Zelaya was seeking a second term. He wasn't. He had simply proposed a vote on a non-binding plebiscite for constitutional reform decided by an elected constituent assembly (after the elections later that year). Polls indicate that two thirds of the population are against JOH running for re-election.

As icing on the increment of abuses, the weeks leading up to the election saw a spike in incidents. The super-band Los Guaraguao was turned back at the airport. Five human rights observers, and journalists from Al Jazeera and Telesur suffered similarly. Other reports flowed across my screen every few hours. In less than 24 hours, opposition (LIBRE) party activist and Mayoral candidate was murdered in La Paz; Liberal Party candidate Ilesia Raquel



Portilla was murdered in La Ceiba; and Jose Mario Discua Enriquez, Opposition Alliance activist (PAC) was murdered in Comayagua.

Apart from its appalling human rights record, the governing National Party seems impervious to scandal. Son of former President Porfirio Lobos, recently sentenced to 24 years' prison in the US, admitted that he used his influence and Honduran police to move massive amounts of cocaine. The former head of the Cachiro drug cartel turned himself in to the DEA in fear of his and his family's lives. He testified that the incumbent President's brother solicited bribes and offered government contracts that enabled money laundering.

Yet the JOH government seems confident of the continued US support. The compromised investigation into the assassination of environmental activist and Goldman (the 'Green Nobel') award winner Berta Caceres is at issue here. A significant bloc of US congresspersons are calling for cessation of US aid and military support until a thorough investigation (the Berta Caceres Human Rights Act). Unlikely, given indications that Honduras' leading families and government connections

were responsible. The US considers JOH a useful ally.

The iron nerve and inordinate sense of entitlement of the regime had many believing that a 'stolen' election was a foregone conclusion. The fact that the military is responsible for the transportation of the ballots and that the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) is stacked with JOH's cronies has the opposition believing that there would be an attempt to 'steal' these elections.

With 60% of the vote counted on Sunday, and Nasralla showing a five-point lead, the TSE inexplicably stopped announcing the results. When they resumed nearly two days later, JOH had caught up in a reversal of the voting trend that even two members of the TSE said was statistically impossible. By Thursday, JOH was 3000 votes ahead.

Coincidentally with the hiatus in the vote-counting, the country was heavily militarised. The fraudulent count by the TSE was so blatant that even observers from the OAS and the EU have raised concerns. Alliance supporters have taken to the streets to confront the military. A general strike has been called, and roads have been blocked all over the country.

Eventually, the TSE declared JOH the winner, amidst calls from the Opposition Alliance for new elections.

Before the election, people opposed to JOH standing for a second term were saying it was a continuation of the coup of 2009. The popular outrage now is beginning to look like the massive mobilisations and street marches of the National Resistance movement against the coup of 2009, which were sustained for months.

Ice... matters, to most...!

by Thom Culpeper

All of you who are Elizabeth David's lovingly informed cooks at heart, may not know, that she spent thirty years quietly investigating matters of ice.

Eventually it was to be posthumously published under the title *The Harvest of the Cold Months*. Her editors published this magnificent effort on all of her profound understandings of the 'natures' of ice and its associated cohorts.

This rare book is an awesome feat of investigative scholarship. Do not, I suggest, NOT have this tome on your bookshelves!

David was by training an historian, a gifted writer on the culinary arts, her 'patch', so to speak. The physics of salt in crushed ice led humanity to a useful way to a sweet, delightful, refreshing outcome and both were inestimably related.

The culinary insight: cream and fruit adjuncts in vessels immersed in crushed ice and salt made it possible to bring about ice cream, sorbet, gelatis and such.

The Chinese have been making ice and ices for in excess of 3,000 years. The Persians froze pools in desert ponds and carted it along the silk routes to places too warm to harbour the frigid waters. In Naples in 1820, naked beggars were seen soothing their parched souls, eating ice with the 'borrowed' silver spoons of local merchants.

In 1800, ice was one of the paths to capital accumulation of the day! Fortunes were made on storing and carting this winter harvest, ice, all over the world.

Managing ammonia in industrial plants turned out masses of ice to keep



the citizenry cool and their foods safe.

In Australia, the ice-box was soon to be replaced by Edward Lees Halstrom's 'Silent Night', an absorption refrigerator which allowed home ice-cream to be prepared.

In Russia, the street vending Babushkas made a genius of the nature of ice-cream and so too the Persians with their Sherbets, the Italians with their Gelati. The 14th century Florentines 'iced' their wines and so in Victorian England, dance halls had giant ice-obelisks to cool the 'heated' dancers. Ice was to become an imperative.

An example of Russian Ice-cream from Elizabeth David

To prepare the 'Custard':

12 egg yolks
1 whole egg
A quart of cream
½ cup of demerara sugar
Extract of 2 vanilla pods or
1 tsp of pure vanilla extract
Pinch of salt

Method:

Warm the cream, blend in the yolks and the one whole egg and sugar, bring to a 'custard'.

Blend ever so slowly. DO NOT let it catch! Stir in the vanilla. Cool and chill on ice or use your 'Ice Magic Machine'.

Serve with, for instance, glacéd Angelica, sugared blossoms, fresh and preserved fruits, Lebanese Rose or Orange-blossom, syrup-waters, chocolates and coffee liqueurs.

Be adventurous: use Japanese Black Sesame paste churned in with the ice-cream and dressed with raspberry sauce for an extraordinary example of a sweet.

A myriad of examples of ice recipes are to be found in Elizabeth David's book.

PS: If thinking solar freezing... salt helps.

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Plant of the month

Red Bloodwood

Corymbia gummifera



by Richard Burer, Natural area restoration consultant

It's a late Christmas in the valleys of Nimbin as the New Year is met with a blaze of creamy white flowers from this common tree, the Red Bloodwood.

It looks once again to be a massive flowering, with the sweet smell pleasant and sifting throughout the landscape. This massive flowering can be met with the January wet and put a bit of an end to an extended flowering period.

Bee keepers rely heavily on this one, as it's the last big honey flow until mid-year. I remember I could get a super filled in a week or so when it's dry and "on".

It's a true old friend this tree. I seemed to have been

around this particular species my whole life and I can see how culturally important it was to indigenous peoples.

The flowers were a great source of nectar, and sucked to get a high energy superfood. The kino was a medicine and also used in tool making.

On the farm I've found it to have good growth, and it's easy to grow from seed. I enjoy watching it grow, and I have great expectations as this tree can grow to 50 metres in some places.

I saw one getting carted out of Nimbin at 5.30am last year, the main trunk was the only log on the truck, so massive, so old.

So there are still some old growth trees about.

Food matters



2018 is upon us, and the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op continues to expand and support local quality fresh produce; eliminate all in-house plastics (almost there); and provide social and training opportunities through our volunteer program.

Phone or text our Volunteer Co-ordinator on 0497-833-717 to get involved.

This month's featured food is the Watermelon.

The watermelon is a flowering plant thought to have originated in southern Africa, where it is found growing wild. Evidence of its cultivation in Libya from 5,000 years ago have been found.

Seeds, as well as paintings of watermelons have been discovered in Egyptian tombs, including King Tur's.

Watermelons were rapidly accepted in Hawaii and other Pacific islands when they were introduced there by explorers such as Captain James Cook.

The more than 1200 cultivars of watermelon range in weight from less than 1 kg to more than 90 kgs; the flesh can be red, pink, orange, yellow or white.

And by the way, there is no truth in the myth, as told by parents to their kids everywhere, that eating the seeds will result in a melon growing in your stomach.

Aside from anything else, there is a serious lack of soil in there.

Watermelon Gazpacho

So refreshing on a hot summer's afternoon. Vary the chilli heat to your liking and

throw in some ice cubes to give it an extra chill (serves 4). Roughly chop:

1 peeled cucumber
1 small red onion
1 large de-seeded red or green capsicum
red chilli (seeds optional)
1/2 watermelon.

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Place in fridge for 2 hours (preferably overnight).

Finely dice a small red onion, cucumber and capsicum and place in a serving bowl.

When ready to serve, add a generous amount of a good olive oil to each soup bowl with a good squeeze of lime or lemon juice, and ladle in soup.

Place extra diced vegies on table to self serve.

Until next month, eat well.

Yuletide at Blue Knob farmers market

by Eric Smith

On the last Market before Christmas, the Blue Knob vendors passed out free cake to thank all of our customers for their loyal support this year.

The cakes, donated by stallholders, ran the gamut from gluten- and sugar-free, to traditional Christmas cake and pavlova.

All featured a local taste or twist: fruit and nuts from here, local eggs from the Backyarders Table, candied citrus peel grown and processed locally.

To be able to give free cake is a joy; the smiles kept on coming.

For those of you who usually come to the market but were unable to attend, I wish to thank you as well. The customers of a Farmers Market make the community; they set the tone.

Our customers are dedicated. They show up in gumboots and with umbrellas (as long as their own driveway isn't flooded). They show up early on days when the sun threatens to bake us all by mid-day. And they show up with a smile.

Our customers are prepared. I have a small

cache of used shopping bags beneath the table in case anyone needs one, and I rarely reach into it.

Bags and baskets come ready to fill with purchases, and many are proud to have the exact change, or something close. And often, jars get returned, saving on packaging.

Our customers have a healthy curiosity. I get a lot of good questions about our products: is this from a native plant, how does it grow, how do you cook this?

Ask all you want, please.

You are asking about the food you eat.

And we are all willing to share of ourselves. Between

festivals, Tell me a Story, and the Growing from Seed talks, many customers sat and listened, and some stood up to speak. And we all learned.

So thank you for making my Saturdays at Blue Knob. We're always glad to see you.

The Blue Knob Market – Farmers, Fermenters, and Fibre Artists takes place Saturday mornings on the grounds of the Blue Knob Hall Gallery (near the corner of Blue Knob and Lillian Rock Roads) every Saturday from 8.30am 'til noon.



Anxiety: a holistic approach (Part 1)

by Trish Clough, herbalist

All of us experience anxiety at times, but for some people the symptoms can be extreme and incapacitating.

Research shows that over 25% of Australian adults experience high levels of anxiety and/or depression. Whilst mood stabilising prescription medicines are essential (and can be life-saving) at times, recent scientific research on brain function show benefits in emotional wellbeing from nutritional and behavioural interventions (eg exercise, good nutrition and meditation).

Stress is a frequent driver of imbalances in brain function leading to anxiety symptoms. Chemical 'messengers' called neurotransmitters communicate information between nerve cells in the brain and the body. Imbalances in the production and activity of various neurotransmitters can lead to serious mood changes.

When we experience stress (physiological or emotional), a brain structure called the hippocampus increases the production of a neurotransmitter called glutamate which signals an excitatory state. Whilst this is necessary for learning and memory activities, prolonged stress leads to excess levels of glutamate which become neurotoxic (damaging to nerve cells).

Glutamate is regulated by another neurotransmitter called GABA which has an inhibiting or calming action. These two neurotransmitters with their opposing actions make up 90% of neurotransmitter activity in the brain so their importance is crucial. Excess glutamate can destroy neurons, over time causing a state of worry and sadness. The



Nature's pharmacy
by Trish Clough, herbalist

part of the brain telling us 'everything is alright' loses some of its function.

GABA is neuroprotective and counteracts the harmful effects of excess glutamate. For example the sudden relaxation effect from an alcoholic beverage occurs from its action in converting glutamate to GABA. (Over the longer term this is harmful because alcohol reduces the neuronal structures producing GABA which in turn can lead to addictive drinking).

Pharmaceutical medicines for anxiety act directly on GABA receptors to calm the brain and nervous system. Similarly, herbal medicines traditionally used for anxiety and mood disorders act to enhance GABA. These include calming herbs such as chamomile, lavender, lemon balm, zizyphus and kava.

While taking prescription medicines or herbal medicines can be very helpful, they don't necessarily address

the underlying drivers of anxiety and mood disorders. Why is there a neurotransmitter imbalance occurring? As discussed, stress is a primary driver of mood disorders. However there are many other factors that can influence the individual person's response to stress.

These include genetic issues, inflammation caused by poor gut health, nutritional status, mineral imbalances, and heavy metal toxicity to name just a few. Some of these issues will be addressed in next month's column.

During a consultation I attempt to piece together like a jigsaw puzzle the contributing factors for each person. This involves taking a detailed history, using assessments such as a questionnaire, and possibly pathology testing. Treatment may involve restoring or correcting the gut environment, appropriate supplementing of specific B vitamins and minerals, and addressing other health and lifestyle issues. Much of this can safely be done whilst the person is taking prescription medications. Herbal prescriptions influencing neurotransmitters are usually not appropriate for people on prescription medications, whereas other herbal support may be appropriate.

Trish Clough is a Lismore herbalist who has been practising for more than 30 years. She now conducts her own clinic practice in Club Lane in Lismore after owning 'Traditional Medicinals' for 20 years. Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452-219-502 or email: trishclough@internode.net.au The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.

Homeopathic remedies for labour

by Robin Stein

In 2017, I spoke about offering Homeopathic remedies for labour.

So I've compiled a comprehensive list for you here. If the correct remedies are given, it is more likely that labour will move along well, making forceps deliveries and the Scoliosis they frequently cause, a thing of the past.

- **Aconitum** - given for fear and anxiety about going into labour. It is common for women to fear the 'pain' of labour, and then this remedy becomes essential to calm her.
- **Arnica** - for bruised and beaten soreness and pain.
- **Arsenicum Alb.** - for when the birthing mother is feeling chilly, with anxious restlessness.
- **Bellis Perennis** - for bruised soreness of abdominal tissues if Arnica has not been effective.
- **Caulophyllum** - false labour pains, cervix fails to dilate. Irregular or ceased contractions.
- **Cimicifugia** - when the cervix goes into spasm, and the uterus ascends high into the abdomen during contractions. Irregular and painful contractions. Can be alternated with Caulophyllum.
- **Chamomile** - unbearable pain early in labour. The woman may feel enraged.
- **Gelsemium** - weakness and exhaustion. Contractions weaken and stop.
- **Hypericum** - shooting nerve pains following tissue damage, tearing or a caesarian.
- **Kali Carbonate** - contractions are irregular. Pain is felt mainly in the back, especially if baby is in a posterior position. This kind of pain is extremely intense and difficult. And the birthing mother feels her back 'will' break, or that she will die. Aconitum can be



given immediately after this remedy has been given. Hard pressure is very helpful.

- **Kali Phosphate** - physical exhaustion, either during or after labour, with few other symptoms.
- **Pulsatilla** - changeable and erratic contractions. Restless, weepy, wanting support and comfort, or to be held.
- **Pyrogen** - not often required but important if a post partum infection occurs in the uterus following childbirth. Rapidly resolves sepsis if membranes rupture a long time before labour begins, or if a temperature develops.
- **Staphysagria** - following an incision or stretching of muscle fibre. Staphysagria will provide fast healing of incisions and laceration.
- **Cuprum Met (Copper)** Over 35+ years, I have never seen a remedy work faster for morning sickness. One drop anywhere on the skin removes it almost instantly.

A few other helpful remedies

Babies remain in a dream or sleep state while birthing. They do not feel stressed, or squeezed while being born, providing labour is moving forward and no mishaps occur.

But stress can occur if the baby becomes 'stuck' especially if the mother is not well supported and she becomes fearful.

If this occurs, Aconitum should be given to the mother, and baby will receive it though the mother. One drop of *Gelsemium*, followed by one drop of *Caulophyllum* will greatly assist and will enable labour to move forward once again.

Newborns do not require Homeopathic remedies unless they are unwell. It takes a baby a few days to recover from being born, which can be quite exhausting, and during those few days they will usually sleep.

Chamomile and *Pulsatilla* are fabulous remedies for babies and small children.

• **Chamomile** addresses the mental and emotional symptoms that appear when this remedy is indicated. When your baby screams as they are being lowered into their basinette, this remedy will assist. They are impatient, whining, angry and spiteful when this remedy is indicated, pulling at their ears, teething, with one cheek bright red.

• **Pulsatilla** for the disposition and mental state. Sad and crying readily, changeable and contradictory, it really is a perfect remedy for babies and young children, who can experience every emotion in the space of a few minutes. Also for babies who suffer colds with yellow-green mucus.

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Two of the WoNS

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

Keeping the bush at bay from your forest home in the lush Northern Rivers can be a full time occupation.

The ubiquitous lantana snakes out of the scrub encroaching on the clearings, wrapping along fences, hanging over the driveway, climbing up trees. Even if you keep it back from the edges of inhabited areas birds carry seeds into the orchard after feeding on the ripe fruit.

The seeds germinate better after passing through an avian digestion system and soon another lantana creeper is wending its way up a fruit tree. If left to proliferate, lantana will reach the canopy where it spreads out, hogs the light and eventually smothers the tree, breaking branches with its weight.

Lantana was introduced to Australia around 1841. Twenty years later it was considered a weed in both Queensland and NSW. Now it covers four million hectares and is one of the WoNS – Weeds of National Significance.

Mainly found in NSW and QLD, east of the Great Divide, lantana also grows in Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. An estimated \$22 million dollars are spent each year on control.

Lantana often colonises disturbed land and along roadsides and creek banks. Common on grazing land, it is toxic to stock and reduces productivity. Lantana can invade the understory of eucalypt forests, preventing access and

altering the balance of the understory. Allelopathic chemicals exuded prevent germination of other species or adversely impact on their growth. There is no ground cover under a large patch of lantana.

Removal of lantana is relatively easy, compared to other woody weeds like giant devil fig which suckers off its extensive root system in a most tenacious manner. The roots of lantana are shallow and will not sucker though woody stems in contact with moist ground will continue to grow.

Cut it off at the base and leave material in the trees to rot and fall out. Pulling and dragging on the tangled lantana stems will injure the tree you are trying to rescue.

Another WoNS found across the Northern Rivers is an aquatic weed, salvinia, *Salvinia molesta*. Considered a weed since the 1950s, it floats on the water surface. Growing rapidly it can form dense mats weighing 400 tonnes/hectare, choking waterways, lakes and dams.

Doubling in size in two to three days, salvinia can quickly become a serious problem. The leafy convoluted plants provide ideal habitat for mosquito breeding. Though it is a fern salvinia does not readily produce viable spores in Australia and reproduces vegetatively.

Water weeds are easily transported around the countryside. Apart from floods, humans are responsible for much of this movement. Originally popular as a pond and aquarium plant,



salvinia can cling to boats, fish traps and other equipment to move from one waterway to another. Wildlife does its bit as well. Ducks, herons, ibises and others waterbirds fly freely to multiple water bodies. They easily carry minute amounts of vegetative material to initiate a new infestation.

Mechanical methods of control of salvinia include simply scooping the plant from the water before it takes over and leaving to dry far up on the bank. It is suitable for mulch, though viable plant material can survive dehydrated for several months, rapidly regenerating when re-introduced to water.

A weevil has been introduced to help manage salvinia. It has been successful in tropical and subtropical regions but less effective in cooler zones south of Grafton.

Regularly inspect dams, gullies and creeks for new incursions of weeds. If you spot a new arrival address it promptly with identification and appropriate management to avoid extra work down the track.

Finer human 'weed' sensitivity

by Geoff Dawe

On a south-facing slope of approximately 50 – 60 degrees, a house is positioned at its base.

Because sun is scarce in winter to this area, mature height two-metre high and wide lily pillies are set out to grow on the contour with an "A" frame level used on the first row.

Lily pillies lower down have been set out according to measurement and in a diamond pattern so at maturity their canopies touch each other.

A bird's eye view of the planting shows that a diamond pattern is used, and because the trees are round in their diameter, there is a small space where they touch where the canopy never closes.

In this space a guild of Jacobi, hippieastrum and spider lily have been planted, diamond pattern, close together in an area of approximately 40 cms. This guild was chosen because they are nectar producers and so involved in providing housing for the insect predators on pests. They are also clumping plants so will eventually grow into each other.

This holds soil better and provides aesthetic appeal to the nearby household. Food plants are not chosen even though areas close to a



Lily pillies

house are valuable for food plants. Slope is too steep to encourage unnecessary human movement over it.

Natural regeneration such as sprouting camphor stumps, lantana, wild tobacco, and sandpaper figs all require regular cutting back to 120 cms. height. Crofton weed and other grasses are cut back to top of soil. Ideally, bush regeneration times fit in with the eating of wild raspberry and lily pillies fruits. Naturopaths are generally in accord that these reduced-sweetness fruits are more ideal for human bodies.

Because of this chemical-free bush regeneration rhythm, crofton and aduratum are becoming scarce, or at least not multi-stemmed, but are resorting

to one or two strong stems that turn out to be more efficient to cut.

The native wild raspberry is cut back judiciously. It is allowed to grow fairly rampantly during the time of the year when it fruits but when fruiting has finished (in this area and year of 2017 in mid-October) it is cut back more to allow sun to even more preferred plants and to not impede bush regenerator's movement.

Bush regenerators cut with secateurs and can develop sensitivity to use one hand to gather a group of grasses and notice that emerging regenerating plants such as the raspberry, wild tobacco and native plants are not cut accidentally. That mulch is then laid down, without

taking physical steps, for nearby preferred plants.

On areas where food plants are being concentrated, this includes sensitivity to emerging paw-paw seedlings, tamarillo and crotonaria that have all had their seeds broadcast in spots where they might take hold.

This is all an example of going deeper into, or merging with, nature.

The technocratic path sleepwalks deeper into a virtual reality. Greater technology dependence, even with renewable

energies, cannot overcome birds breaking their necks on window panes.

Humans at this stage of their existence are quite willing to blame feral cats for bird loss, yet there is silence in regard to bird loss caused by technocratic dependence on window panes.

The "weed" system presented here, is toward long-term weed proofing of lower growing "weeds" to provide no niche for weeds. Here too, it is noticed that secateurs become the most efficient tool; whipper snippers have no value.

Because of this finer "weed" sensitivity, not only has human attention been focused to learn at closer to soil level, but a small step has been taken toward post-industrialisation.

The joy of meaningful work

Just down the hill from me is a little parcel of land perched above a gully, where a seasonal watercourse whirls its way through pools and eddies, and then into one long rocky cascade.

I love the dynamic nature of an on-again off-again stream. In one season this creek is singing, roaring, and at others it is silent; underground. The trees sparkle every shade of green; the boulders are moss-covered and the water runs clear.

There is easily a lifetime's work to do here, for a willing human. *Lantana* is clogging the creek, and threatening to pull down some of the rainforest emergents. The old house has solid bones, but has become dilapidated. Currently it is visibly under threat by the giant *Monstera* plant sprawling towards it with maws yawning. This little dollhouse-shaped turret deserves to be occupied, to have a little fire crackling in the hearth, and the smell of spice and oil in the kitchen. Somebody started a dream here. It's anyone's guess why they didn't finish it.

I imagine the work required to bring the half-grown forest of paperbark and ti-tree, towering eucalypts and dense lilly-pillies into adulthood. I imagine the hundreds of *Lomandra* and *Dianella* to sow and pot up and plant out, and the

dozens of species of trees to collect seed from, and sow and pot up and plant out also. There's the job of keeping the wallabies off the trees for a while, in cutting the vines off the saplings every season.

In late spring, when the ground cracks with the dry, and the unseasonal heat sweeps in as if out of nowhere, it's necessary to slosh buckets of water from the creek onto new trees. In the winter, when vegetative growth slows down, there's the job of collecting rock for walls and paths, and digging gravel out of ditches and culverts.

On winter mornings, in the lemon butter sunlight, there is the important task of following the little quartz road around the bend to see what exactly, this day of all days, is around the next corner.

In Autumn there's the job of catching rain, and collecting leaves, and leaving things in their places. And there's the job of sitting by the water, and setting leaves on their downstream course



like little rafts, into the unknown.

Whether you believe that humans have an obligation to recreate ecological landscapes in their previous images, or to somehow change the course of the future under the sheer weight of green surface area, this is at least meaningful work. For some, it is the only means of sanity. While the International

Declaration of Human Rights enshrines the right to productive work, and to rest, it does not enshrine the right to refuse ecosystem-destroying technologies or social expectations, nor does it define exactly what "productive" means. A better term perhaps might be "meaningful work" and a society which values meaningfulness for its citizens would certainly be a productive one.

Entrenched political bias holds back much in this country when it comes to meaningful work in the environmental sector. As the basis for a sustainable and sane society, the environment has been so progressively relegated to the far dark corner of political priority that the environment did not even rate as a budget item in the 2017 Australian Federal Budget.

Years of funding cuts to institutions such as the CSIRO and National Parks have intentionally crippled these organisations. Not



by Anastasia Guise

only is this disastrous for the practical matters of climate and economy, what this does is continue to hold back thousands of willing and passionate people from finding meaningful work in the sector of their choice.

Intelligent people with expensive degrees in Ecology, Botany, Climatology and Environmental Engineering are forced to compromise, taking work in other sectors, or working as *volunteers* – even paying their own food and travel expenses – in some of the large non-government conservation organisations. That these organisations curate these volunteer opportunities is brilliant. But this is 2018. These positions should be paid, all of them.

If we may no longer eat, drink and live off the land freely, as our ancestors once did, then we need to be able to make a living looking after

the land. And since public money has been poured into subsidising the mining of the land – of ores, minerals, trees, nutrients, and water – then private money should subsidise a public budget to restore it.

Our country can afford it. Just a fraction of the military budget, or a fraction of what we spend on non-serving political pensions would sufficiently cover the costs of necessary ecological restoration works.

As I stand at this little gully below my house, the trees and water sing up my best self, making my hands itch. The notion of such joyous work is itself a joy to me, and I want it for all of us.

When I see the rivers, lazy and brown, and laced with Indian Coral Tree, I see our multi-governmental failure to put our money where our mouth is.

What we must do is not compromise, but act. We could take our shovels tomorrow, and put the trees back in along the rivers. We could restore a tiny piece of land, and stitch it together with another, and another, like a planetary patchwork quilt.

And we must not forget the incredible value of our meaningful work.

Anastasia is an author and environmentalist, writing on ecology, science and humanity. Facebook: anastasiaguiseauthor

Koala Kolumn

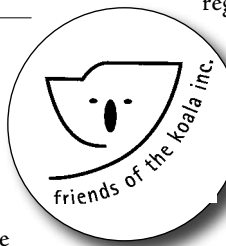
by Lorraine Vass

Happy New Year everyone and welcome to our 12th year of Koala Kolumns!

I'm expecting 2018 to bring us quite a bit more light to the end of the koala conservation tunnel here in NSW. Not that I believe the Whole-of-Government Koala Strategy, when it is finally released, will be a silver bullet; far from it. My optimism springs from many things, in particular the increasing responsibility for koala management being taken by local government in our part of the world and the flagship status that the koala has assumed for so many mainstream environment and conservation groups in recent years. It's great to see the koala 'cause' growing stronger by the day.

Thirty years ago, NSW's Koala Summit was convened by the National Parks and Wildlife Service from the directive of the Hon. Tim Moore, arguably our best-ever environment minister. Moore had only held the portfolio for six or seven months before the two-day conference which he saw as a vehicle for determining the future management of NSW's koalas; to enable '... the preparation of a state-wide plan of management for koalas that represents the interests of all parties, and primarily of the animals themselves.' Coming up with guidelines for such a plan had been the over-arching motivation for the 1986-87 state-wide, cross-tenure koala survey. A determined advocate for koala conservation, Minister Moore had realised the task would be far from straightforward.

The Summit attracted 170 registrants, including a respectable number from our



region and its published proceedings are still useful. As for an effective plan, well it took another 20 years for the release in 2008 of the approved recovery plan, but we're still not there; it never was properly resourced. Nevertheless, the koala is still with us; hence my faith in the resilience of this most remarkable leaf-eating marsupial and in the commitment of the thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people who are actively engaged in ensuring its survival.

It being summer, although we don't hear a lot about it in the Northern Rivers, of all the threats that koalas face, wildfire can be the most far-reaching and damaging. We're fortunate that large areas of our region are not particularly prone to destructive wildfire. The notable exception is the Tweed Coast where fire is recognised as the single biggest threat to the koala population's long-term survival.

The Mid-North Coast on the other hand has experienced a number of fierce wildfires in recent years. Before Christmas a fire at Big Hill Trail in the Limeburners Creek Nature Reserve between Crescent Head and Port Macquarie burned for five days over 10,000 ha before being declared under control. The fire had crossed in to part of Port Macquarie Koala Hospital's 94ha Maria River Eucalyptus Plantation and triggered a huge search and rescue mission involving the Hospital's own specialist team, a private contractor who volunteered time and machinery, NPWS personnel and equipment, the RFS and Port Macquarie Hastings Council, which in conjunction with the Hospital chartered a helicopter enabling more



Joey rescued from the Big Hill Trail fire-ground

complete observation of areas inaccessible on the ground, thus identifying areas still alight and locating koalas and other wildlife.

Over two weeks 54 koalas were found and assessed. Two were dead. Some had to be relocated. Eight koalas have been admitted to the Hospital for treatment. So far one has been euthanased. The koalas remaining in unburnt patches are being monitored weekly to ascertain the foraging habitat's on-going viability. Whether the remaining unburnt habitat will be sufficient for the survivors' needs – food as well as living space – is the question, so monitoring will continue for some months to come.

Fire management for koalas is complex and the subject of ongoing investigation. It's generally accepted that high intensity wildfires and high frequency fire, even at low intensity can be catastrophic. High-intensity fires burn the canopy and can cause death or injury, not to mention reduce the availability of foraging habitat. Fast-moving fires fanned by strong winds impede escape. High frequency fire may mean that the population simply cannot reproduce fast enough. It can also reduce the regeneration of preferred food trees.

Unburnt areas can provide refuge habitat, but the extent of fragmentation, the proximity of a source population, the intensity and extent of the fire and the degree

of other threats will determine how quickly koalas repopulate habitat following fire. On the other hand in some areas koalas appear to survive in burnt habitat. There's also some evidence of koalas surviving high-intensity fires in summer because of their practice of leaving trees early in the day to shelter in cooler places such as rocky outcrops, or even wombat burrows – a matter of being in the right place at the right time, although they've still got to find forage afterwards.

Controlled, hazard-reduction burns are usually scheduled for mild, low-wind days in winter and are intended to be low to moderate – intensity and temperature. In areas of thicker vegetation, where koala trees are often located fire flame height and potential scorch heights can exceed those planned and koalas may sustain burn injuries. Even coming into contact with burnt lower parts of trees can impact on a koala's well-being, causing discomfit and perhaps injury such as burned paws and singed fur.

Before finishing, a reminder about the North Coast Koala Survey: www.northcoastkoala.net If you haven't already gone online to share your thoughts about koalas and their management, there's still time. The survey will be open until early February.

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 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. You can also email us: info@friendsofthekoala.org phone: (02) 6622-1233, and follow on Facebook. If you would like to book a tour through the holidays please ring 6621-4664.

To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat ring the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 13-15-55. Until next time, happy koala spotting.

Psychoactive plants and the senseless war on people/drugs

by Cameron Storey

It can be argued that the drive to alter one's consciousness is as primary as thirst, hunger and sexual desire. There is archaeological evidence of the use of psychoactive plant-based drugs dating back at least 10,000 years. There are four principles that tend to become obvious with good research and a modicum of intelligence.

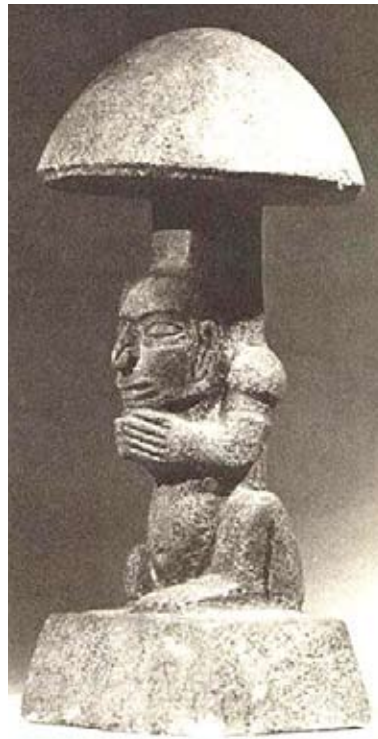
1. There are no good or bad plant-based drugs, they can all be used or misused depending upon person and application. More on addiction later.
2. Every culture throughout history has been involved with psychoactive plant-based drugs including Australia.
3. Cultures tend to approve of one or more plant-based drugs but disapprove of other plant-based drugs while at the same time having no scientific basis for said preference and prejudice.
4. The sooner we accept, legalise and facilitate responsible use of psychoactive plant-based drugs (especially in micro-doses) the more connected, inclusive and free we'll be to build a more sustainable society with more economic opportunities.

In mainstream Australia, alcohol, caffeine and tobacco (it is illegal to grow your own tobacco plants though) are the accepted plant-based drugs, despite the fact that alcohol is one of the most toxic and dangerous psychoactive plant-based drugs in relation to crime, violence, accidents, road fatalities, and emergency admissions.

Tobacco, and caffeine to a lesser extent, are two of the most addictive of psychoactive plant-based drugs in terms of speed of addiction, and level of difficulty of withdrawal.

Alcohol, tobacco, the senseless "war on drugs" and the vast amount of damage they all do are also heavily supported by your tax dollars. This is not to say that alcohol and tobacco can't also be used medicinally, but just that their abuse is widespread and non-rationally accepted as OK.

There are numerous psychoactive plant-based drugs that have been used by indigenous peoples over several thousand years that have recently been deemed illegal. This designation is neither rational, nor scientific, nor utilitarian nor of sound economic sense. The illegal classification of some psychoactive plant-based drugs has occurred within only the last 48 years and



Mushroom Stone c. 1000BC – 500 AD, Guatemala City.

Photo: R. Gordon Wasson, from 'The Wondrous Mushroom'

not in all countries.

Many so called illegal plant-based drugs have medicinal, traditional or spiritual applications, some of these include: Cannabis (use

dated back 6000 years plus), betel nut (use dated back 12,000 years), opium (use dated back 5400 years), psilocybin mushrooms (use dated back 6000 years), coca leaves (use dated back 8000 years), khat (use dated back thousands of years), ayahuasca (use dated back 5000 years), salvia, and mescaline (use dated back 5700 years).

The human body has receptors for every psychoactive constituent of every plant. What does that tell you? Maybe the prohibition on allowing people to grow their own psychoactive plant-based (soft) drugs is responsible for the consumption of harder drugs like speed, cocaine, ice, heroin or NPS (new psychoactive substances).

If you put a rat in an empty cage and give it two water bottles, one with just water and one with water laced with either heroin or cocaine, the rat will almost always prefer the drugged water and almost always kill itself very quickly within a couple of weeks. But if you enhance the environment for the rat, create 'Rat Park', with food, sex, rat-friends, fun stuff, drugged and normal water, the rats don't need the drugged water. None of them overdose or use in a way that looks like addiction.

The opposite of addiction is

not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is meaningful connection to ourselves, others and our environment.

Unjust laws, war on drugs, land costs, taxes, endless wars in foreign countries, unequal work conditions and opportunities, and environmental destruction etc are part of an empty rat cage that society creates.

In 2001, Portugal de-criminalised the possession and use of all drugs, focusing instead on treatment and prevention, which in turn lead to reductions in student drug use, prison overcrowding, drug related court cases, overdoses and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Portugal now has the lowest drug use rate of any Western European country. Any person with more than two brain cells can see that this approach works better than the senseless "war on drugs" which is mostly a "war on people and traditional medicinal plants."

The Dharma Centre and Medicinal Gardens on Lillifield Community is presently closed over the NSW school holidays but Friday 9.30am Yoga Class at Birth and Beyond will continue through the holidays. Call 02 6689-7120 or Facebook "Dharma Centre - Lillifield".

The right tool for the job



by David Ward

Addictions are things we must work hard at, procuring the substance, spending all that energy and time that full-time using demands.

Fairly soon we can find ourselves asleep to the very reason we are living this lifestyle in the first place. We become unable to recognise that we may be using the wrong means for achieving our desired outcome, of feeling supported, appreciated and understanding our reason for being.

We are effectively creating an induced dream state in which to conduct our lives, an apparently safe place, the driving force being a fear of waking from the dream.

There is that familiar phenomenon that goes with full-time cannabis use, the cessation of that essential

component of a healthy existence, our precious sleep-time dreaming. Spending our awake time in a perpetual dream appears to use up our natural psychic resources, so essential for processing and making sense of our lives.

We use our once-favourite substances in an ever-increasingly abusive way, unable to recognise the harm we cause ourselves. Living in a dream of self-delusion, we fail to see that substances, including anti-depressants, will never be a substitute for human interaction and self-care.

Being conscious and free during our waking life we get the added benefit of self-interaction whenever we are alone.

One of the many benefits of a strong yoga practice, along with waking up, is the opportunity to connect with our higher self. Here the best solutions to our situation become obvious, and we can also choose to make a pact with our higher self, the best way of holding ourselves accountable.

Returning to the human race and all the support that goes with it, building our yoga practice and re-igniting the magic we once found in our controlled cannabis use are just a few of the benefits that waking up offers.

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



Animal talk

by Donna Connolly

I am blessed to do what I love. I work with animals, on an intuitive, body, and soul level.

I assist them in verbalizing their messages to their human counterparts. Including Reiki healing.

Time and distance are not a barrier as the modalities work on an energetic and vibrational level.

I have been fortunate to work with local characters, such as the beautiful Polly from Djanbung Gardens, Native wildlife, Chimpanzees in South Africa, Spinner Dolphins and Sharks in Hawaii, and Horses in America.

At times I have had animals show up telepathically and physically for healing.

Animal Communication and Reiki, intertwine and interconnect, and many say that Reiki enhances communication work with animals and vice versa. Although complementary in many ways, the two techniques are not identical: they have different aims.

With Animal Communication, the goal is to create a dialogue between the communicator and the animal: to *listen* to what the animal has to say. I receive the messages in many ways; visual images, feelings, thoughts, taste and smell.

As an animal communicator, I am an advocate for the animal, as well as giving support to the human companions by clarifying issues that are confusing or unknown (for example



surrounding unknown behavior problems, releasing trauma, unexplained medical issues, the transitioning process).

With Reiki, the practitioner's goal is to become as clear and empty as possible so that the energy can flow strongly for the highest good of the animal. I do not need to know what the animal's problem is, Reiki will always go to the source of health issues, bringing balance and healing on all levels.

I may or may not receive intuitive information as a result of the deep energetic connection created during the treatment: such information, when received, is merely a by-product of the Reiki experience, but is not the goal or purpose of the treatment.

The goal and purpose is to

be a vessel through which the energy can flow – to let go and allow Reiki to do its work, without expectation or attachment to outcome.

We are all capable of inter-species connection, indigenous people all over the planet do this effortlessly, we were born to interact on this level.

I look forward to connecting each month with real case studies. Also, I am happy to answer any questions you may have. I am available for in-house or distance consultations.

Donna will be facilitating classes throughout the year. Please email her to express your interest: rivergem88@gmail.com Web: www.rivergem.com.au Facebook: Rivergem Readings & Reiki Intuitive Animal Healing Instagram: donna_dolittle

Connecting with horses

by Les Rees,
Animal Naturopath and
Massage Therapist

Of all the animals I've encountered in my lifetime, it is the horse that has provided me with the knowledge of real connection. I've been blessed to have had so many equine teachers that have guided me along new paths of thinking and for that I am truly grateful.

Horses don't make it easy for you if there are lessons to be learned, they can push you into a mind space that can be very challenging. I read a book the other day and one of things that stood out for me was that when life is frustrating or hits an all-time low it is actually a good thing, providing us with a lesson that leads to new ways of thinking and acting. When we choose to ignore these precious lessons, they will be repeated. We just have to be open to the challenge!

Horses have helped me in my work as an animal herbalist and massage therapist, I often think that they get sick so that I can learn new ways to cure them. This is certainly true of one of my current horses who initiates a daily conversation with me concerning her issues.

"There is a poo in my stable,

I couldn't possibly eat in here."

"Scratch me here, no not there a bit further up, get it right!"

This is amusing, but just the surface stuff. The real connection starts working when you begin to understand their language. For this you have to ignore your own and concentrate on theirs, you have to learn to think like a horse, breathe in its energy, and be in the moment. Horses have been trying to teach us silly humans for so long and all we've repaid them with is ignorance and selfishness.

Many have remained stoic in their nature and put up with the bullying and gadgetry involved in our inability to control them. Saddles that don't fit causing pressure in the back, girths that are too tight stopping the ribs from expanding properly each time the horse takes a breath, nasty painful bits and bridles that put pressure on sensitive nerve endings, the list goes on.

Then having put up with all that, they are pushed to jump even high jumps, have people leaping on and off them, regular whipping if they don't perform to our arrogant requirements, etc.

Connection is born out of respect, it has to be earned and there is no better teacher



than a horse if you are willing to take the first step. It needs a huge amount of patience and openness, you cannot be governed by your own desires for instant results, but when you break into that zone you will be repaid with a lifetime of trust and companionship.

I believe that there are different levels of connection. In the beginning, it is about noticing the everyday needs, most horse lovers have got to that level. From there on, the levels become more complex and for some can involve a lifetime journey to gain more and more knowledge. There are a lot of experts in the equine world with a

range of extraordinary skills ranging from psychological, physiological, muscular skeletal issues, biomechanics, nutrition, natural therapy, chiropractic etc. but it is how we use this knowledge that will define our connection with these wonderful beings.

Horses have worked with humans for thousands of years, fighting in battles, pulling heavy loads and competing in dangerous sports, surely we owe it to them by learning the language of equus!

Happy New Year, folks.

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It's all about the reward

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

Most people know how to train a dog. You ask the dog to do something, the dog does it and you give a treat.

That's called positive reinforcement, you reinforce the behaviour with something positive. This form of training can also be used with horses.

The most popular method of positive reinforcement with horses is called 'clicker training' (also used with other animals).

The same method can be used without a clicker, perhaps the words 'good boy' to mark the behaviour then the treat given or a rub between the ears. This is easy to understand and the importance of the reward is understood to promote learning.

However, for some reason this all falls apart with negative reinforcement. This is where a negative stimulus is applied, the animal responds and the negative stimulus is removed. In this situation, the removal of the negative stimulus is the reward.

Often when I'm doing lessons I see people apply a negative pressure then not remove the pressure when the horse responds. These same people understand to reward if using positive reinforcement, but don't realise it's exactly the same for negative reinforcement. The pressure must be removed as soon as the horse responds or the horse will be 'detrained'.

An example is where the rider puts pressure on the horse's sides with their legs, the horse increases their pace, and the rider continues using leg pressure. Eventually the rider ends up doing more and more while the horse does less and

less. The rider will sit there kicking the horse just to get it to walk. At this point they blame the horse and say they're lazy or stupid.

What has happened is that they've taught the horse not to respond to the leg pressure, because they have not rewarded. Rewarding the horse when using negative reinforcement is essential to ensure they learn and retain their skills.

It's been described well by one Australian horse training legend Tom Roberts. He asks the question, 'why do you jump up when you sit on a drawing pin?' Most people would answer 'because it hurts'.

But the true answer is because you know that if you jump up it will stop hurting.

This is what you are looking for with your action, the stopping of the pain from the drawing pin (the negative stimulus). It's exactly the same for the horse.

They don't do what we ask because we apply a pressure, they do it because they know that the pressure will stop if they do it. If you don't remove the pressure, there is no longer any reason for them to do it.

Another Australian trainer, John Chatterton, talks about the principle of 1%. Sometimes the reason people don't remove the pressure when the horse responds is because they want more. They keep applying the aid after the horse has started responding because they want a bigger response. This results in not releasing. If your horse gives 1% of a response you must reward it.

This lets the horse know they have done the correct thing. Without it they



won't know. If you release after they've given 1% then the next time you ask you might find they'll give you 5%. And on and on it goes until you reach 100%.

Rome was not built in a day and horses are never trained in a day. The rider who is willing to build on a behaviour will end up with a horse that responds fully to the lightest aid. The rider who expects it all today will end up with a resistant, dull horse who is unhappy and no pleasure to ride.

This is a very important principle that all riders would benefit from understanding. It results in a happy horse who is a pleasure to be with and is responsive and light to all aids.

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