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# Fermenters converge on Blue Knob

by Marie Cameron and Jim Arachne

The Blue Knob Farmers Market has established its reputation as a fermenter's paradise.

For locals and visitors with an interest in internal flora and fauna, the BK Farmer's Market's annual Fermentation Festival was a must-attend event. Set in the shadow of the Blue Knob landmark, this tiny market wrote a fermentation agenda for the whole of Australia when it hosted its third fermentation festival in March.

The art of fermenting food and the joy of eating it is as old as civilization. In countries such as South Korea, the health of the gut and eating fermented foods is a natural part of the day. Here in Australia, big food corporations dominate, and the health or destruction of the gut is of no importance. The Fermentation Festival empowered all to ferment food and enhance our contemporary lifestyles.

Fermentation is a rich and expansive subject. Eric Smith was the MC and he kept the extensive line-up of speakers on schedule as they revealed their fermentation specialty. Cheese-making natural starters were explained by Pascal Destandau, Rah Poolman explored the power of intuition in fermentation, Deborah Perry laid out gut health and probiotics, Tomoko Nishi highlighted cooking with Miso, Natalie Brookes unravelled caring for cultures, Kathy Smith pooled water and milk kefir, Marion Lennon popped 'Jun, the champagne of kombucha', Alex Basch fermented his pastry, Stephen Howard revealed artisan loaves, Anna King gave the basics for wild fermented honey, Tom Rothsey emphasised the gut repopulation protocol, Krystle Medina brewed the ginger beer and



The crowd in the speakers tent  
Photos: Women with a Camera

Paul Chermak closed with "Fermenting the Community".

Conversations buzzed on live organisms, gut, healing, digestion, enzymes, active bacteria and secret cultures. Market stalls sold sauerkraut, kim chi, pickles, kombucha teas and honey vinegar.

Paul and Jeni Kendall-Tait from Gaia Films covered the festival and recorded the speakers. The 2016 BKFM Fermentation Festival DVD can be purchased at the market's Backyarders' Table.

Ferments currently available at the market include miso, natto, kim chi, sourdough bread and tempeh, which is sold occasionally through the Backyarders' Table.

**Natto** is the newest fermented food at the market. It's made from cooked soy beans fermented with *Bacillus subtilis*, a powerful probiotic bacteria. Lots of Japanese research is available on natto and one of its proven benefits is in preventing or arresting osteoporosis.

A study of 944 women found that many who were post-menopausal were actually able to increase bone density by eating natto. Overall, post-menopausal women (a group at higher risk of osteoporosis) had an 80% reduction in loss of bone mass from the thigh bone and a 60% reduction in loss of bone from the lower arm.

Natto is very in high vitamin K2, likely the highest of any food, and separate trials of this vitamin show that it can reduce fractures and sustain bone mineral density in people who already have osteoporosis.

Natto has also been found to reduce high cholesterol by 8%, high triglycerides by around 13% and high



Rah Poolman

blood pressure by 10%.

Matured, traditional natto is very strong, smells a little like blue-vein cheese and is stringy – a bit of a challenge to the Western palate. Nao's stall at the market is selling mild natto, just perfect to start with, if you haven't used this product before.

After you've spoken with Nao, the next stall to visit could be Tomo's to sample her salty, savoury and delicious handmade miso. Tomo is also running classes in making miso, koji, soy sauce and Japanese pickles.

Stay tuned for future articles on research into other fermented foods available at Blue Knob Market.



Pascal Destandau

## At the Co-op, many minds make great work

The Co-op is undertaking a re-design of our shop space. Many minds make great work, so we're asking for our members' input.

Surveys have been available instore, on our website: [www.nimbinfoodcoop.org](http://www.nimbinfoodcoop.org) and on our Facebook page for the past few weeks; members who want to let us know what's important to them, have until 11th April to complete a survey on one of these platforms – so get in quick!

Membership cards will soon be available. Current members will be able to pick up their cards at the counter by asking one of our helpful volunteers. Cards will need to be shown to collect your membership, volunteer and

co-ordinator discounts, so make sure you keep them safe. Replacements will be available by donation.

We are now stocking *Peace, Love and Vegetables'* Cashew Cream Cheese. Made from activated cashews and probiotics in Byron Bay, this stuff is completely addictive as a spread, dip or cheese replacement. It even goes gooey and puffy when you put it on top of a pizza! We have been selling out, so get in quick or place a pre-order in our special orders book. We are also stocking P.L.V.'s sauerkraut range while our local producers, Earth Belly, take a break.

Hope everyone enjoyed Easter and remember... Don't Panic, It's Organic!



# Café Blue Knob’s local soul food buffet

by Joline Shervey

*“Life is a buffet and we can pick from it whatever we want, but it all depends on which buffet we’re going to, to serve our health and the well-being of our planet.” – Joline*

With our money, our power, and also often our health, we choose to support the world of business by how and where we spend our money.

Most of us have heard of that idea. Every time we give someone a dollar, we vote. The same is true regarding supporting our health, choosing which cafes and restaurants we go to. Do we spend our money on fast and processed foods, which are usually without integrity and don’t support our well-being or the planet?

Do we attain our major food supplies from supermarkets where a lot of high impact processes and food miles had been involved to create the end product? Or do we spend our money on foods that back up the environment and our health? We would have to consider that sometimes Australian sourced food is more low impact than organic foods imported from overseas, for example, or that anything plastic-wrapped has used precious resources, besides the

possible added nasties.

We are blessed in the Northern Rivers with our farmer’s markets and the principles of our local farmers, the Co-op in Nimbin and the general sustainable food movement around Nimbin, but to make the movement spread further, more and more people need to come on board and vote with their money. Vote for low impact, your health and your planet by choosing the local café using local produce over take-away, etc. You get the drift.

The soul food movement we are passionate about is just that: recipes and meals with soul, locally sourced from the Northern Rivers – low impact on the planet, high impact on our tongues!

The Easter Extravaganza Fermentation Buffet was so well received and enjoyed that the café decided to offer one Sunday a month to cook up a storm of local soul food buffet. Gourmet, healthy, varied, fresh, clean, local and beautifully delicious!

Life is too short to not eat in integrity, and be health conscious, but that often leaves us with a one pot curry, and even though we do love curries, we love variety. As we have established in recent articles, creativity is needed when cooking! It is so often responsible for having

fun in the kitchen permanently, preparing healthy and satisfying meals.

As part of that creativity we want to bring up the ‘no waste’ wholesome meals/foods. The concept is not new of course, however it is fun to discover new ways to use food scraps instead of throwing them out. For example, we have just recently discovered that the roots of leeks are not only edible but really delicious when fried. They have a sweet, earthy then slightly bitter crunch to them. Perfect to top off those leek onion dishes.

Or when peeling mushroom skins, the peels and stems can be pureed into a lovely creamy ‘mushroomy’ sauce for rice (we’re talking epic risotto here), quinoa or pasta. And instead of those potato peels going into the compost, they could be fried up in coconut oil and enjoyed as a crispy vegan snack. Ah well, next time!

Happy soul food searching, and come in for a chat and a cuppa!

**Café Blue Knob April schedule**

- **Saturday 8th April:** A Sense of Place, Exhibition Opening with two course dinner (meat \$25/veg \$20), bookings required.
- **Sunday 24th April, 1pm:** Sunday Soul Food Buffet for families \$39/



head (children \$18) – bookings required RSVP by 20th April (advise of dietary requirements when booking).

♦ **Thursday 28th April, 12.30pm:** Artists & Friends Lunch with exclusive two course meal (meat \$24/veg \$19), bookings required. Phone for bookings (02) 6689-7449 or 0416-616-804. Here’s a favourite recipe:

**Chai Poached Pears/Apples**

**Ingredients**

- 1 litre water
- 1½ cups sugar or less (can be replaced with local honey or stevia)
- 2 chai tea bags
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 cardamom pods, crushed
- 1 or 2 cloves
- 4 x medium beurre bosc pears or local apples, peeled

**Method**

Place the water, sugar, tea bags, cinnamon and cardamom in a medium saucepan over high heat and bring to the boil. Remove the tea bags and add the pears or apples. Cover with a piece of non-stick baking paper and top with a small plate or lid to weigh down the pears. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 35–40 minutes or until the pears are soft.

Carefully remove the pears from the syrup, increase the heat to high and cook for 20–25 minutes, or until thickened slightly. Spoon the syrup over the pears to serve. Serves four. Goes well with chai flavoured kefir ice cream, or other dairy favourites.

For any questions or more info, call Joline 0416-616-804 or (07) 6689-7449.

# Guava paste and jelly



**The Imbiber’s Ark**  
by Thom Culpeper

The Shire is dripping with Guava fruits. Most going to the worms and sadly far too many to the fruit flies. Not good!

The selections of this marvelous fruit are a rich and valuable health and culinary resource for utilisation. It is one of nature’s truly great balms. The Vitamin C content is four times that of the orange, and in the case of Guava-seed oil, the fatty acid, Linoleic acid can be as high as 75%. Guava is currently under intense study as to its use in the management of diabetes. Guava is probably not fattening.

The Apple Guava (*Psidium littorale* and *guajava*), (lemon and common), is a native tropical fruit of Central America, Mexico and South America and now a major crop on the Indian sub-continent and Africa. A hardy, quite long-lived perennial that can tolerate temperature as low as -4c. A relatively long-lived, up to 50 years, evergreen, early fruiting tree, two years from seed, that’s a useful fruit economy, other than fruit fly, which can be managed, It’s relatively, in

Oz, pest-free. The timber, like that of the persimmon, is utilised by luthiers.

Consumed fresh, it’s a perfumed delight, especially when accompanied with a dip of dried sweet and sour plum powder. The high pectin content is utilised in the making of jams and jellies and fruit pastes. A number of low-acid sauces are compounded on a guava base. Its use as a fresh juice is a commodity in the countries of intense guava propagation, South Africa being an exporter of guava processed products.

As booze, the Mexicans prepare *pulque de guava* is a popular quaff. A ‘tea’ is made in Brazil of the leaves, and an infusion made of a blend of leaves and fruit called ‘*cha de goiabeira*’ is a common medicinal draft.

After a couple of weeks playing in the fruit extracts, processes and techniques, I will share with you some of my outcomes.

**The paste: Spanish, ‘Guayabate’**

To make a kilo.

A kilo of just-ripe fruit, cut in half, deseed, save this seed stuff in 250mls of water. Cover the ‘flesh’ with water, boil, then simmer until

soft, gently lift the bottom of the fruit, don’t let it ‘catch’.

Boil the seed pot, simmer for half an hour, strain the fluid from the seeds and add the mucilaginous product to the cooked guavas. Cool and rub the fruit material through a static sieve or use that under-utilised Mouli puree sieve.

Add 250gms of sugar to 250mls of fruit. I suggest Demerara, Rapadura, Panela or sugars such as light Muscavado, natural unrefined materials.

Using a jam pan on low heat, cook, stir constantly with a wooden spatula or spoon ‘til the mix is at set point, test on a block of ice ‘til it comes away in one piece, beat for ten minutes and the paste will become quite thick. Turn the paste out on to an edged pine board to cool for a day or so, in the sun. Cover with muslin, turning for another day or so. Cut into 70x30x25 pieces, wrap and store in foil or greaseproof paper.

To use, take a piece of Guava paste, equal part of cream cheese, wrapped in filo pastry and baked. Or eaten as is or on a ‘crumbly’ cheddar. Enjoy – lots of work, but worth it.

**The jelly: Brazilian, ‘Goiabada’**

Use jelly making techniques, if that is the requirement. Careful not to stir the cooking fruit, lift it gently to avoid scorching, clarity of the drained juice being imperative for the jelly. Use light sugars for the jelly, such as Agave, Rapadura or light Coconut blossom sugars. If you’re a chilli fan, blend chilli flakes with the jelly, reheat and jar up. Very, very habit forming.

For more: contact Thom at: [thewholeearthveg@gardener.com](mailto:thewholeearthveg@gardener.com)



## Making a sustainable world

Lismore has hosted the first of a new kind of public exhibition that will travel around the world, gathering and sharing each region’s ideas and projects.

Andrew Willoughby, convenor of the ‘Making a Sustainable World Exhibition’ said, “The exhibition is open to all schools and community organisations to display their ideas, art and projects. It will encourage global citizens to join together to develop the changes we need to make a safer world.”

The exhibition will be shown later this year in London, Madrid and Athens, and next year in China, Japan and France.

It includes both display posters and more detailed background stories, research and links, available free to all to copy.

The exhibition aims to inspire by displaying the activities and innovations that are occurring in our community and around the world to move us forward into a sustainable world.

Andrew said, “Everyone, wherever they live, is a citizen of the world, able to take action both locally and globally, to exert their political power.”

Andrew spoke about projects from the COP21 UN Climate Change Conference, held in Paris in November 2015. He said, “For example, China last year designed a complete global smart grid to power the entire earth with 100% renewable energy by moving electricity between countries, using specially developed ultra-high voltage transmission technology.

“They calculate that the current entire world energy use is only 0.5% of the energy available in sunlight.”

There were speakers and displays on local and global strategies and projects occurring in the areas of Climate Change, Direct Action, Aboriginal Wisdom, Education, Wellbeing, Local and National Government, Community Building, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Economics, Food Production, Environmental Conservation and Participatory Democracy.

One of the speakers, Greens candidate for Page, Kudra Falla-Ricketts said, “Climate change is the greatest threat facing our world and our young people. We need to take serious action on this issue today to protect the earth for the children of tomorrow.

“Making a sustainable world is vital, and the most important step is investing in renewable energy, so that we aren’t leaving a devastating mess for the future generations to try and clean up.”

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## Plant of the month

### Small-leaved Tamarind *Diploglottis campbelli*

by Richard Burer

A rare species of Riverine rainforest, probably no longer found in the valleys of Nimbin, this species is widely planted and propagated.

This lovely tree grows straight to around 20m and makes for an excellent shade tree and landscape ornamental.

The attractive red pink fruit is juicy, edible and stunning, on the tree or on the ground.

## ENVIRONMENT CENTRE NEWS

by Stewart James, President NEC

Here we are in April 2016 – nearly two years on from the successful end to the Bentley campaign. Can you believe it? "Time and tide wait for no man."

Reflecting back on it I sometimes feel the whole thing was a bad nightmare on one hand, and a sweet dream on the other. Had we been a little later in our campaign, a little less organised, and less united and connected as a community, the outcome may well have been different. Never forget the Government was only hours away from sending in 850 police to keep everyone safe. As if that was going to work!

It astonishes me that a community can so clearly, in such an organised and concerted way, say "no" to an invasive, industrial activity that was going to radically transform our entire landscape, and still be ignored by its elected representatives. Well, ultimately the Government couldn't ignore the power of the Bentley protest, and the rest is history.

But far from respecting such a powerful demonstration of community will, the Government seems determined to ensure it will never be repeated, with the passing last month of extreme new laws to prohibit precisely the kind of activities which were on display at Bentley. There are new powers to disperse gatherings which, at the police's own discretion, risk harm to participants. To seize objects capable of being used to lock on to equipment or fences. To fine protesters up to \$5,500 (a tenfold increase) and potentially send them to jail for up to seven years. It's hard to imagine the local community will put up with and be cowed by, such laws, but they send a powerful and frightening message which is not easy to ignore.

Despite the talk of protecting public and worker safety it's easy to read the new laws as an almost unrestricted power for the police to break up any kind of public gathering they care to, with no magistrate's approval required. Does this strike you as legislation that strengthens and protects our democracy, or serves the interests of big corporations like mining companies.

I have spoken to a fair cross-section of the community about the new protest laws and people express their anger, defiance, fear, outrage and pure dismay verbally, and you can read it in their eyes and faces as well. Many people say they are ready for round two if that's what this government wants, but the ante has been upped considerably,



and obviously no one wants another protracted struggle with even higher risks and penalties. Ironically the government is inflaming tensions rather than calming them.

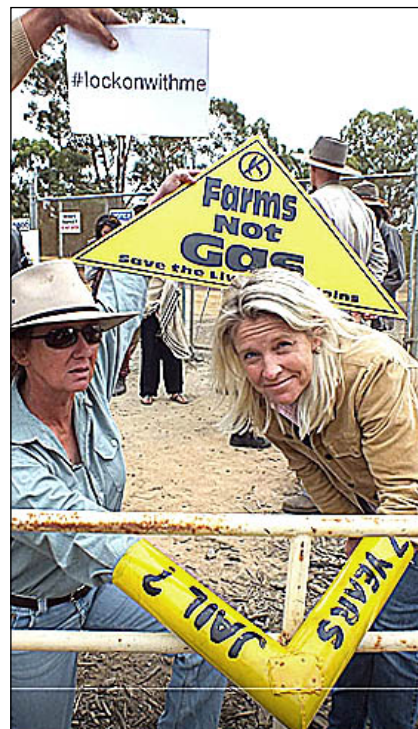
Minister Roberts said that Metgasco had no social licence in the Northern Rivers. Now his government is taking away our fundamental right to gather and peacefully protest, effectively removing our community's right to grant or withhold social permission to developments in the first place. This seems even more sinister in the context of the government's recently released draft North Coast Regional Plan which talks about the mapping of coal and CSG reserves in the region and the expansion of the resources sector. You'll be hearing more about NEC's response to the draft plan in a future article here.

### Community van

The NEC's community van has been sold after four years of environment-related duties around our region, as well as transporting people to places like the Pilliga and Leard State Forest. It was an instrumental tool for NEC to be able to move people around the region and the state as required.

During the Bentley campaign, I remember it was used to transport some of our region's Aboriginal Elders to Brisbane Airport so they could fly to an indigenous conference in Alice Springs. Also during the campaign it made many trips to Lismore and Casino so people could access showers and other services.

A special thank you to NEC, Kyogle GAG and members of our community who funded and helped maintain the van over the years; also those individuals and groups who prepared her for registration this year. She leaves our region to continue serving the environment, in the Pilliga campaign this time. We all wish the van and all who travel in her safe onward journeys.



Undeterred by the new legislation

Target image by Rosie Lee  
Lock-on at NSW Parliament House photos by Joe James Holden

# Does nature look after itself?

**Weed Words**  
with Triny Roe

You don't need to weed. The plants all harmoniously co-exist and humans don't have to interfere with the 'natural processes'. Or do they?

Perhaps a natural ecosystem, developed after millennia of evolution and never impacted by humans, stays in harmonious equilibrium. These days there are few such pristine environments to be found.

For thousands of years, humans have cleared, logged, farmed, built cities, roads and towns and dug holes in this planet (as well as exterminating a number of plant and animal species).

Humans also moved plants and animals around from continent to continent, sometimes deliberately, sometime inadvertently. When travelling to new lands, colonisers and migrants brought along their favourite plants and a few hitch-hikers.

Each plant species has evolved with a particular set of other plants, animals, insects and pathogens which kept their populations in check and balance. In a novel environment, without inhibition, the numbers and size of some plants can expand rapidly, often with adverse impacts. These rampant species can impact on wildlife, biodiversity,



Annual Ragweed, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

reduce productivity, increase farming costs and affect our lifestyles and health.

Annual Ragweed, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, a wind pollinated species, is widespread around Nimbin. It hails from North America where it is the most common of the ragweeds there. A dominant weed in several European countries and considered naturalised in SE Qld, it seems to be very happy in this valley too. Drought tolerant and able to grow in inhospitable zones, this is another plant that is most likely here to stay. To avoid it becoming another major pest species it should be controlled to reduce its prevalence.

The pollen from this plant is responsible for a significant number of cases of allergic rhinitis, aka hay fever, every year. It can also trigger or exacerbate asthma. One plant

can produce millions of pollen grains which are carried on the wind for hundreds of kilometres.

A local old timer reported ragweed only recently arrived in Nimbin, around seven years ago. It is now well established and can be seen flowering along the roadsides. Ragweed enjoys creek banks and fence lines where the slasher doesn't reach. This tough plant can establish readily in paddocks, particularly overgrazed ones. Sheep and pigs will both eat it. Hogweed is another common name.

Annual ragweed flowers mid to late March, before dying off over Winter. New seedlings appear in the Spring. Seed is spread by flood waters, carried in soil for landscaping or roadworks, contaminated stock feed or by stock.

Control measures include hand weeding, slashing before it flowers and crop rotation. Take care when handling, and wear gloves and long sleeves. Itchy rashes can occur on sensitive individuals. A stem gall moth and a leaf eating beetle, introduced in Queensland, have had some impact. Other methods still need to be used in conjunction with the biological control. The widespread use of glyphosate in broad-scale agriculture has led to ragweed developing resistance to this herbicide.

Annual ragweed may have some uses as food for Australian wildlife. In its native North America, several species of birds and mammals feed upon the numerous seed. Ragweed produces an average of 2,500 seeds per plant. Modern homeopaths use ragweed in remedies for allergies. Giant ragweed, *Ambrosia trifida*, a cousin of annual ragweed, was used by the Cherokee Indians in their traditional medicine and for fibre. With an ability to accumulate heavy metals such as lead and cadmium, ragweed is suited for phytoremediation of contaminated soils.

Familiarise yourself with the vegetation on your property, learn to recognise new arrivals and deal with them in an appropriate manner.



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## Politics of greed

by Geoff Dawe

The economic system the West subscribes to has been inadequately developed by partially-grown humans; humans who are having trouble transcending the animal passions.

In the middle of the 19th century, amidst a spectacular flurry of industrialisation, Economist, Adam Smith; sociologist, Herbert Spencer; social reformer, Jeremy Bentham and others were material beneficiaries of the burst of industrialisation rather than victims of it. They devised an economic system that legitimised the animal passion of greed. They reasoned that since humans were greedy, an economic system should make use of the motivation of greed to bring humans all the wealth they desired.

They didn't use the word "greed". Greed was euphemistically dressed as "self-interest". Their reasoning did not extend to the idea that perhaps greed was not a human's highest look, and perhaps the society needed to organise in favour of greed being transcended.

Organisation beyond greed requires in the first place humans dropping superstitious beliefs surrounding their excessive need for material comfort, by engaging the human ability of rationality.

One of the irrational ideas accepted by the people is that there can be jobs for everyone with continued industrialisation. That is simply not true. A purpose of industrialisation is to reduce work. Anyone could easily reason that industrialisation

doesn't produce jobs overall, but that doesn't stop most people from wanting to believe that humans can have industrialisation and jobs too. It is not so much that the societal conditioning is all-persuasive. It is that people wish to believe it. They are willing to give up their power to an irrational and therefore superstitious, belief.

A new technology creates jobs for a few specialised workers, but the overall design is to shed far more jobs than those newly employed. The World Economic Forum for example, recognises that the rise of artificial intelligence and robots will create two million new jobs as 7.1 million are lost! It's like a dog chasing its tail. Technologies do not produce more jobs overall any more than the dog can reach its tail.

Politicians often speak of the need for new technologies and jobs in the one breath without acknowledging industrialisation and job creation are contradictory. Bill Shorten said, for example, "The march of new technology is not merely something to applaud - it must also be a call to arms - a warning that Australians will need new skills and better training to win the jobs of the future." (SMH, 15/3/16)

In terms of reality where there is understanding that technologies essentially remove jobs and destroy life on a planet, Bill is right that there will be a need for "new skills and better training". But there will be no need to "win the jobs of the future" for no-one will be unemployed when humans occupy rural, family, gardening farms.



The "new skills and better training" will mostly be in providing food forests and vegetable gardens as well as shelter and warm clothing. This will require human smarts in finding all required for these economic needs, regionally, cooperatively and with simplicity.

This is in comparison to the current dysfunctional economic system based in constant exploitation and competitiveness, denial of the finiteness of resources, excessive long-distance trade and toxin-dependence; in sum, greed.

Bill acknowledges there are currently one million Australians under-employed. They're supposed to be. That's the point of technologies - to cause people to become unemployed and under-employed so industrialisation in itself can have its way. The current economic system is not about meeting the needs of the people. It's about meeting the needs of industrialisation: greed so fully screwed up it eventually meets the needs of no-one.

# Train wreck in the tea leaves

I have a problem. It's a First World problem, and I'm really embarrassed to admit it, but I can't find my favourite brand of organic Earl Grey tea. It's out of stock; missing from the shelves.

I know bergamot is out of season in Calabria right now, so that might be it; or maybe some distant unreported disaster has obliterated the Sri Lankan tea fields (and has been deemed unreportable).

Although not an advocate of highly processed or imported goods, when my guard is down they still jump in with me and wrangle their way home like little gremlins. One willing exception I do make is my organic Early Grey tea. Having not grown any great quantity of *Camellia sinensis*, the tea making plant, or the bergamot orange *Citrus bergamia*, I'm beholden to an external grower, processor and transporter to deliver me my daily cup.

And now some faraway event – or decision – has deprived me of what was once a great pleasure and (gulp) source of happiness.

In moments like this, I question the rigor of this little padded permaculture cell (sell?) I've shovelled, planted, sweated and sung my way into. How reliant am I? How self-sufficient? Who am I kidding? How long would I last? How long would we all last?



Permaculture Principles  
with Anastasia Guise

If the great machine of industrialised mass-production ground to a halt tomorrow, how many days would it take before we would be at each other's throats, neighbour against neighbour, looting supermarkets and petrol stations for the last foreseeable quantities of fuel and processed food?

How long would it take before gangs of self-appointed new-world-orderists turned up in our fields and farms to enslave us, the way others were enslaved before us? It's the apocalyptic prepper fantasy I know, and not one I'm usually prone to entertaining. (My fantasies usually involve lead singers... and lots of cups of tea...)

Of course, overnight apocalyptic cessation of the flow of convenient processed food and consumer goods which make the lives of most of us in Australia very

comfortable is more unlikely than what is really happening: rising prices, a widening gap between rich and poor (both between countries and within them), and a thickening smokescreen that exploits the doomsday rhetoric when it is economically useful, and discredits notions of ecological limits when they threaten the fickle daily digestion of the Beast.

Corporate interests have been consolidated through successive Free Trade Agreements, not least the recently signed TPP, which grants provisions for corporations to sue governments. (Which is us, really. When governments do get sued, where do you think the money comes from? Tax dollars.) On top of that, a slew of downright anti-constitutional legislation aims to restrict more and more the agency of ordinary citizens who stand in the way of private profiteering.

Almost all our consumer goods are manufactured overseas in toxic and exploitative conditions, designed to be used once and thrown away (where to?), and the tools and technologies which are key to our ever-lengthening lives of frantic leisure/glamour (!) are somehow having shrinking lifetimes of their own.

How is it that the acceptable lifetime of a refrigerator – that pinnacle

of First World existence – can be just three years before it too is thrown in the trash? Paradoxically, these holograms of obsolescence persist for hundreds of years after we are gone, working their way in microscopic form through the food chains of all future generations of whichever species manage to survive. (Plastic-eating bacteria, probably.)

There will be no overnight apocalypse, so stop waiting for it. Instead we're in a long, slow train wreck. Instead of radical localism and sustainable, even regenerative agricultural policies, Australian governments at all levels pursue the continuation of a quarry mentality, selling off the nutrient we mine out of the fragile topsoil of this country for a pittance year after year.

They keep shouting "jobs! jobs!" but the jobs they promise are meaningless white collar fantasies designed to uphold a system where an extremely small number of privileged white men get to shuffle money between one another's pockets. This all sounds very dramatic, yes. But make no mistake; our times are truly Orwellian.

As that train is grinding to a halt, and the view out the window is becoming more clear and painfully beautiful, there are a myriad of opportunities to ride those



screaming tracks home to their resting place. If you are thinking of a career change, find a spot where you can plant something useful, wherever you live. Educate and advocate for ecologically sound products and processes. Fix stuff. These are some of the few truly meaningful and necessary jobs that exist. If you think I'm ranting, you need to go back to the top of the article and start reading again. I haven't had my bloody cup of tea!

So let's imagine another scenario. Let's ask ourselves: how many days would it take for us to get our shit together, if we really had to? Neighbour standing with neighbour, our sleeves rolled up, our hearts hanging off them, our white collar fantasies thrown into a pile of weeds and rubble?

How many days would it take to realise just how cherished are soil and seeds, and how immeasurable are all of our skills, talents, energy and intelligence? How many days would it take for us to feel completely unburdened of all that stress and propaganda, to realise that life does not come through us to be siphoned off for corporate profit, but rather to be magnified through us and turned back to the earth from whence it came?

How many days would it take for us to forget the mad sad path we once seemed so set upon, and to smile and live again?

Let's ask ourselves: How inter-reliant are we? How resilient? Who is kidding us? How long can this last?

[www.communitypermaculture.com.au](http://www.communitypermaculture.com.au)

## Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

The Save Ballina's Koalas Campaign is at a crucial point.

In mid-February the NSW Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) published the Ballina Koala Plan. This document will inform Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt's decision whether or not to give the green light on proceeding with the contentious route chosen for the Pacific Highway Upgrade through the Blackwall Range.

Within a couple of weeks Friends of the Koala, its partner the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and Save Ballina's Koalas campaigners had submitted to Minister Hunt their concerns about the Plan's underpinning population modelling and the efficacy of the mitigation measures proposed.

Here's a summary:

### Concerns regarding data used in the Population Viability Analysis (PVA):

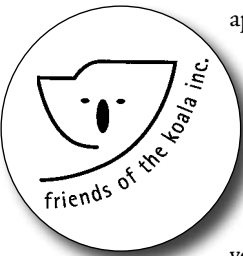
- The PVA uses an overly-optimistic estimation of the current koala population (236), at odds with that provided to the PVA author by the field study (196).
- The PVA underestimates the number of koalas likely to be displaced by the road's construction (five koalas), compared to the number, 10-14 estimated from field study observations of koalas recorded on or near the proposed route (residents claim the number is actually 18).
- The Plan assumes that all of these five displaced koalas will be relocated, therefore there will be zero impact, the assumption being that the animals will move of their own accord or that they will be translocated. Translocations elsewhere have had mixed success, therefore it should not be assumed

all displaced koalas, be they 5 or 18, will survive.

- Mortality during construction of the new road has not been accounted for. Koalas will likely be killed as a direct result of vegetation clearing – displacement will increase disease and the chances of predation by dogs, not to mention vehicle strike.

### Concerns regarding the assumptions made about the proposed mitigation measures' likely success:

- RMS has committed to offset 34ha of koala habitat loss by planting 130ha of koala food trees. The estimate of 34ha is inaccurate. Independent mapping of one of three key habitat areas shows more than 40ha of vital habitat will be cleared in that area alone.
- The Plan also assumes all 130ha of planting will be successful, ignoring the difficulty of establishing tree cover, in particular factors such as soil suitability, wallaby predation, drought, flood, insect attack, weeds, fire and water logging.
- The Plan fails to account for the time it will take for the trees to become suitable habitat for koalas. RMS proposes to plant half the 130ha prior to construction but the minimum time trees will require to reach a size that is suitable for koalas to utilize is 4-7 years, likely longer. The other half will be planted post construction.
- The Plan seeks to achieve a 20% increase in fecundity by proposing the application of the vaccine designed to counter the effects of chlamydia on breeding females. The vaccine is still in development and besides, only low levels of chlamydia were detected in this koala population.
- The current major cause of mortality



appears to be road strike and dog attacks, with juvenile males disproportionately affected. Unless these issues are tackled, it will not be possible to reduce mortality or substantially increase breeding rates. Adding a new Highway, increasing motor vehicle traffic, and driving animals away from current habitat, will increase mortalities.

- Despite the inclusion of a large number of wildlife crossings, the Highway will still result in habitat connectivity being reduced by 60%. It can take two or three koala generations for koalas to use overpasses; even underpasses can take a long, long time.
- As for fencing, too often it fails due to human error [gates are left open] and poor maintenance [holes in fencing are not fixed, weeds take over]. Besides, koalas are creatures of habit. If there's a fence in the way, their instinct is to climb it.
- Mortalities on subsidiary roads and appropriate mitigation measures have not been properly addressed e.g. mortalities from increased activity of quarry trucks moving materials. While some fencing of subsidiary roads is proposed, there is no mention of wildlife crossings on these roads, therefore connectivity will be further reduced, a factor not included in the PVA model.

Several independent scientists have also lodged submissions, perhaps the most notable being international PVA expert, Dr Phil Miller, Senior Program Officer at the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), a specialist group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC). The CBSG's mission is to provide neutral and non-political conservation planning expertise to governments, specialist groups, zoos and aquariums, and other wildlife organisations.



Dr Miller's primary focus is the design, implementation and evolution of the PVA process. His technical review of the PVA conducted for the Ballina Koala Plan raises significant issues with choice of proper scenario definition, input parameter specification, implementation of model components and interpretation of model outputs.

We understand that minister Hunt is reviewing all the information submitted to him.

It's not too late to add your voice. Urge the minister to properly protect this population of koalas; to consider very carefully the independent scientific evidence and to determine that the risk of extinction presented by the planned route is too great. Request that he red light the route and direct the RMS to find an alternative.

More information can be found on the Save Ballina's Koalas FB page.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233. For info about koalas and how you can assist koala conservation, visit: [www.friendsofthekoala.org](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org) or email: [info@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org) or phone 6622-1233.

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



by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

I believe it is not necessary to use a bit to communicate effectively and safely with horses.

I have been riding and teaching in cross-under bitless bridles for over 10 years now and have experienced many situations in the saddle that showed me with absolute certainty that I have more control in a bitless bridle than with a bit.

Horses are flight animals, when we inflict pain on them while we ride we set up a cycle of fear where the horse is afraid the human will hurt them, and vice versa. When the bit is removed the shadows from this experience evaporate and a whole new reality

emerges.

The number of people I talk to who admit they are afraid of their horses is shocking. That we allow and accept such a situation is sad and unnecessary.

Because the bit creates a fighting, fearful headspace in the horse, these people are right when they say they couldn't possibly ride their horse in a bitless bridle. Their horses do feel dangerous and the belief that a bit is therefore required to be safe on such a beastie is a logical conclusion.

The thing is that if they can take the leap, trust themselves and their horse and remove the bit, the horse changes – a lot. The previously normal and accepted belief that

horses are dangerous and must be controlled with force and pain becomes embarrassing as the human begins to really understand this animal the horse, and comes to know how intelligent and gentle they really are.

When I'm helping people to transition their horses into a bitless bridle there comes a moment when the horse softens and begins to trust that this is the new reality. Their fear evaporates and without the ever present fear they can listen to the requests of the rider with a clear mind and give back calm and clear responses.

The same happens for the human. After a while they stop being fearful of their horse and start to trust them. What used to be work becomes fun. The backwards and forwards communication between the two becomes clearer and clearer and the mutual trust grows. It's for this that I do what I do.

To help more people learn about the cross-under bitless bridle and how to transition their horses into them I am holding a two day clinic. The clinic is to be at the RDA Centre, 377 Houghlahans Rd, Booyong, on Saturday 16th and

Sunday 17th April.

Day 1 (Saturday) is specifically for horses newly transitioning into a bitless bridle. It will be a safe supportive environment with a qualified and experienced bitless instructor. The day will include both groundwork and riding skills. Bitless bridles will be available for loan if required. Maximum eight riders.

Day 2 (Sunday) for horses who have been bitless for a while. The day is geared to helping people stretch their confidence and skills and includes groundwork, advanced bitless riding and games.

The fee for riders is \$150 per day (this includes free fence sitting on the other day). Fence Sitters are also welcome, fee \$30 per day (\$50 for both days).

Dr Cook's cross-under bitless bridles and reins will be available for purchase over the weekend.

Please contact me for more information and to book.

Happy Horses Bitless,  
phone 0401-249-263,  
email: happyhorsesbitless@gmail.com Web: www.happyhorsesbitless.com  
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## Body blow follows court win for fearless father

The 'fearless father' we reported on last month who treated his cancer-stricken daughter with cannabis oil has escaped a conviction for supplying dangerous drugs in a landmark court case.

The court heard the father had researched the benefits of medicinal cannabis on the internet, and sourced the drug from northern NSW and the US.

He cooked his daughter food in cannabis oil and put oil into chocolate.

In sentencing, Justice Peter Flanagan said, "One can't help but appreciate the desperate situation of a parent who is faced with a child diagnosed with the possibility of a fatal cancerous tumour of the stomach," he said. "I also take into account that no harm was done to her."

"One can't look into the future to see

if it [cannabis] one day might be legal — for now it remains an illegal act."

He handed the father a two-year good behaviour bond with no conviction.

Adam is now able to see his daughter without supervisors, which had been part of his bail conditions, and to spend time with her in the home in Brisbane where he is renting a room in a share house not far from the hospital.

The victory celebrations were short lived, however, when further test results revealed that the cancer has now spread to her spread to her right thigh bone and bone marrow.

If you want to help you can donate to their gofundme account for Rumer's medical bills at: [www.gofundme.com/healingrumerrose](http://www.gofundme.com/healingrumerrose)



## Wedding Bells

Best wishes to Tribal Magic proprietor Peter Lawrence and his new bride Neus.

## Lions Road donation

Kyogle Council has commended the Kyogle Lions Club for its generous support over many years towards the maintenance and upgrade of the Lions Road.

The 68km road crosses the McPherson Range at Richmond Gap, providing a more direct route to Brisbane. It was built by the Kyogle Lions Club with massive community support in 1971 to connect existing Shire roads at Gradys Creek in NSW and Running Creek, near Rathdowney in Queensland. In 1995 the last section of the road was sealed.

Kyogle Mayor Danielle Mulholland said the Council and the wider community appreciated the commitment of the Lions Club in maintaining the road, which has become a popular tourist route.

The Mayor's comments come after club officials presented Kyogle Council with a sizeable donation for the upkeep of the road at the start of March.

The money was raised over a number of years, and includes donations from members of the public who use the road.

## Crossword Solution

From Page 31

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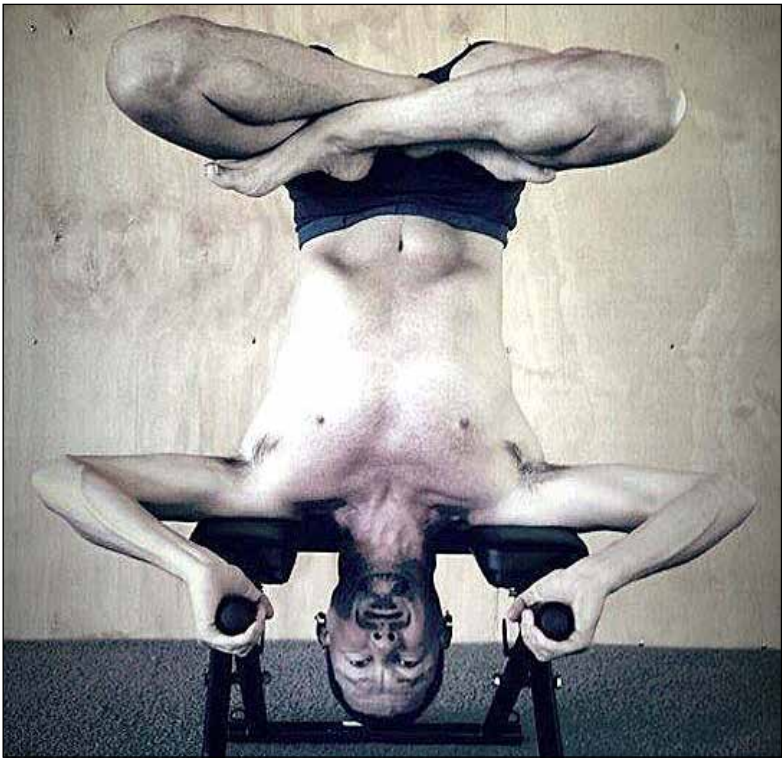
# Yoga... but what do you do for cardio?

by Cameron Storey

It's a question I get asked often, and the answer I give is "Yoga". People have the misconception that there is no training effect on the heart with yoga. Really? Is this based on their experience of yoga classes? Maybe, or maybe just their idea of classes. Maybe they imagine a class of people lounging around. Before I started yoga I did solid cardio by running long distances (half marathon, twenty mile and two marathons by age 14) and several other sports, seven days a week for 13 years. My resting heart rate was 56 beats per minute (BPM). Move forward 25 years, I do hardly any cardio, have a 20-minute walk or paddle once a fortnight, daily yoga practice and have recently introduced High Intensity Interval training (12 minutes a week!) My resting heart rate is now 48 BPM. Let's examine how the heart rate

changes during a regular medium-paced yoga session. From resting heart rate 15 minutes of sun salutes raises the beats to around 80-90 per minute. After 15 more minutes of standing poses the heart rate is near 100-110 BPM. During the next 35 minutes of forward bends and twists with some up-dogs and down-dogs it's around 125-135 BPM. At the peak of the practice the heart rate can reach 165-175 BPM for back bends or bird poses. Then the heart rate is brought down slowly over 20 minute back to resting again. But this is for my body that has trained every day for many years. Your body may actually have a faster beat rate for most of the workout if you are not used to the yoga workload. But just know this: yoga which raises the heart rate on average from around 80 BPM to around 150 BPM is perfect for stimulating a cardio effect (and of course you need to take into account your age when calculating

cardio heart training ranges). If you like extra cardio, go for it but you can get what you need (in terms of cardio) from Yoga. One factor that is not mentioned is why top athletes who do so much cardio can have heart problems. Yoga recognises that working the heart is one aspect, but resting the heart is also vital for maximum health. Long forward bends and passive inversions rest the heart because the brain is below the heart level so the heart can relax more as gravity takes some of the circulation workload. Yoga Master T. Krishnamacharya (1888-1989), who taught B.K.S. Iyengar (1918-2014), K. Pattabhi Jois (1915-2009) and Indra Devi (1888-2002), could actually stop his heart as he demonstrated with a combination of asana, prana and mind control, and look how long they all lived with their yoga practice. One small piece of advice after 40 years of physical training: start gently and



progress slowly with awareness – it's a thousand time better than an inconsistent and spasmodic practice interspersed with weeks of no practice at all.

Cameron teaches yoga classes at Dharma Centre Yoga Space, Lillifield Community, (15 minutes from Nimbin) For more yoga info, phone 02 6689-7120 or Facebook: Dharma Centre - Lillifield

# Natural law

by Helene Collard

Autumn has arrived in the Southern Hemisphere, Spring in the North. The changing of seasons on the earth, reminds us there is a time and a place for everything. There is a time to play, and a time to rest. There is a time to take action and a time when it's best to wait. There is a time to direct your energy outward, and a time to focus inward. Spend regular, quality time, in and with nature, and you will become more attuned to your own natural seasons. Last month I shared the concept of 'heart intelligence' and the importance of living in and through the heart. This month I'd like to stay with that theme and talk about 'forgiveness'. Feelings of resentment, anger and blame often divert us from living in the heart, which can adversely affect our current relationships. In addition, these stored feelings, create an accumulation of stress in our body, which in turn creates physical, mental and emotional issues (Be Happy & Healthy: Forgive, HeartMath Institute, August 2012). Therefore, if we recognise when resentment, anger and blame present for us, and we gently send those thoughts and feelings to the heart, we allow this powerful 'emotional clearinghouse' to do its intelligent work. We may have to repeat this process, however each time, we allow the heart to clear more toxicity and hurt, whilst creating more understanding and perspective (HeartMath, 2012). HeartMath founder, Doc Childre calls this a 'mental and emotional bath'. He notes that 'most of us bathe our bodies regularly, however we will store negative and toxic junk in our mental and emotional systems for years without a cleanup'. So this month, be aware when negative thoughts and feelings arise in you and gently send them to your heart, knowing it has the power to



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

transform this for you. Our collective growth and unfolding spirituality is unavoidable. Living in and through your heart is the journey and the destination. Enjoy the ride. Helene has been practicing Reiki for 10 years and recently opened the Yemaya Centre for Reiki & Wellbeing in Lismore. Helene has a special interest in personal growth and wellbeing and offers a number of services. Helene works with individuals and groups, and has delivered a variety of wellbeing workshops since 2008. Her qualifications include Bachelor of Trauma & Healing and Reiki Master. For more about Helene and her services visit: [www.helenecollard.com](http://www.helenecollard.com) or reach her on: 0405-656-797.

# Bowen therapy and the senior person

by Tonia Haynes

Recently we celebrated Seniors Week. A whole week? Come on! Considering the courage it's taken to get this far, whilst negotiating the ills, spills and joys of life, reaching senior status with our heads and heart still intact is nothing less than heroic. The young and foolish should be bowing their heads in daily veneration, rather than giving us a brief thought for a meagre seven days. Coz old age definitely ain't for sissies. Last week I was preparing for the yearly dinner party. A most anxious affair, I might add. I had just finished assembling the moussaka and was proudly gazing at the impeccable layers of sauces and vegetables I carried in my hands towards the fridge. When I dropped it. Since I was a kid, I have always had the knack for tripping over the hem of the ball gown on the grand entrance, but this time it was a wrist that has a mind of its own. Fortunately, one of Master Chef's angels quickly stuck out a silver-slipped foot and the moussaka didn't fall far. Just far enough for those impeccable layers to be shaken up into a silent, seaming cacophony of disarray. At the same instant it sprayed its cream and neapolitana sauces across the rug I had just shampooed. A necessary task provided by our dear old dog, Skippy, who is now suffering from varying stages of dementia with the accompanying symptoms of incontinence. I looked at the moussaka, shrieked in horror and rescued the rug from the busy tongues of the dogs, who looked quite offended. After all, they were only trying to help. Then I laughed. I truly do believe that laughter is by far, the best cure for all ills. And I thought, old age is just like this. Eventually, some experience of life that includes being dropped on our heads, will unfortunately



pop the mushrooms through the moisturising cream. Because it seems that no matter how much we do our best not to, we all end up looking lumpy on the outside, even though we may know that on the inside we are still delicious. Oh yes. Old age is full of surprises. We could all write volumes about our own particular journey towards seniority. But of course the younger folk wouldn't read them. It's never going to happen to them. Heh, heh heh. So what does one do, now that one has a senior's certificate? Firstly, the most important thing to remember: No matter what, never lose your juice. As we grow older and the wrinkles and lumps manifest both outwardly and inwardly, it is easy to think we've lost our oomph forever. In truth, it hasn't really run away, it's just quietly waiting in a corner of your mind and heart to be invited back into your life. While rediscovered it may not return you to leaping over brick walls or even doing a full day in the garden, it will return a level of kindness and contentment to your heart and put a twinkle in your eye. And let's face it, we all like to spend time with someone who has kindness in their heart and a twinkle in their eye, no matter what their chronologicals say. On a more physical level, I take one vitamin E, a multi B, a Q enzyme 10 and a slosh of liquid colloidal minerals daily. Added to that, I eat lots of alkalising green

stuff and drink mucho water. I began this regime in my fifties when the arthritis turned into the bitch from hell. I'm 70% better now. But for those of you who have never had the experience, arthritis truly can be the ultimate bitch from hell. In my profession as a Bowen Therapist, massuese etc, I have discovered that chasing away arthritis and associated senior ills may take a bit of time. After all, it's taken us many years to put that calcification around our bones, which dulled the nerves in our spine. Nerves that reach everywhere in the physical body and help all of our organs to be well and our hearts to be lighter. When people come to see me I am most interested in what they tell me about themselves because for every tale, I'm sitting there thinking, what can I do to help here? Often I can. Sometimes I can't. That's life. But for everyone who graces me with their presence in my clinic, I openly give the best supportive information that I know of right then. And because I totally refuse to let go of my juice, the info I share is evolving all the time. Just one little word of advice. We all like to pretend we are still ten foot tall and bullet proof. Being a victim is very scary. In hippie terms, one could conjecture that it might, probably, be a 'total freak out.' But when you go to any therapist worth their salt, they always have the desire to empower you. So the more you tell them, the more they know how to treat the muscles and bones in your body that absolutely do affect everything else. Sometimes they need to be more gentle than usual, but they can only do that if you tell them what's going on with you. Right now and in the past. Love, Light and Giggles. I'm in clinic in Nimbin Wednesdays and Saturdays. For an appointment, phone 02 6689-0240, mobile 0439-794-420.

# The five senses

by Brigid Beckett

The five senses, sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell, connect us to the cosmos. When they are not functioning optimally it is often troubling and inconvenient. It is also a sign that there are deeper imbalances in the meridian systems.

Both sight and hearing are dependent on the liver and the kidney energy.

Deafness and tinnitus are ear-related problems that become more common with age. Tinnitus can be associated either with kidney deficiency, or liver stagnation or fire. If it is worse with stress, it is probably liver related, if worse with tiredness and better with rest, more likely to be kidney deficiency.

These problems can be treated with acupuncture, but often take some time. Improvement is more often seen when the person's general health is improving with treatment.

Another problem with ears is recurrent infections, usually involving damp heat and phlegm. Damp can linger, especially after repeated antibiotic courses. This is often seen in children with glue ear. Glue ear can also be related to diet, with too much dairy and sugar also causing damp. Glue ear responds well to herbs and improved diet.

Phlegm heat or phlegm damp is common in long-standing ear infections. Spleen and stomach

problems are usually the cause of phlegm and damp. This may be from too much dairy and fried food in the diet, or indirectly from stress or emotional issues and liver stagnation.

Chronic ear problems can also be part of lingering pathogen syndromes such as chronic fatigue or post viral syndromes. All these are definitely treatable by treating the underlying cause, but need persistent treatment as phlegm, damp or lingering pathogens tend to be slow to move.

Vision problems are also more common as we age. Blurred vision is caused by liver blood deficiency or liver and kidney yin deficiency. If there is pressure behind the eyes, or dark rings or swelling under the eyes, the kidneys are involved.

Red and itchy eyes are due to wind, or sore red eyes are caused by liver fire.

The shine and brightness of the eyes reflects the state of the shen or mind, as the heart brings blood and qi to the eyes. Excessive use of the eyes can damage the heart and mind, excessive screen time especially in children is probably not beneficial.

In fact the heart is a major factor in all the senses, as mind is responsible for the cognition of all external stimuli.

The sense of taste is associated with

the spleen, and also the heart.

There are five tastes associated with the five elements and their associated organs: sour for wood, salty for water, sweet with earth, bitter for fire and pungent for metal. These tastes may be diagnostic.

The sense of smell is associated with the lungs, and once again, the heart. With strong lungs and heart, there will be a good sense of smell. The association

with the heart explains the emotional connection to smell, and why smells often evoke memories.

Another aspect of smell is its relation to phlegm, which in Chinese medicine can be "substantial" or "insubstantial" and cause a variety of symptoms. People with phlegm are often very sensitive to smells, especially fumes, either perfume types or smells such as petrol. These smells may bring on migraines in these cases, or other illness.

The senses and their relationships with organ systems are complex. In Chinese Medicine they are important in many ways and at a number of levels. Either in obvious problems with the sense organs, or as part of a pattern, it is important to consider these senses that connect us to the world.

Brigid Beckett is a registered acupuncturist working at Community Acupuncture in Lismore and Nimbin. She can be contacted on 0431-702-560



# Clearing a room of ghosts

It's a funny thing reading other people's letters, particularly when these letters are those between one's own father and his lover and cover a period of over thirty years.

It's unnerving to discover that they make no mention, at all, of me, and my life and only speak of their tumultuous love, regrets, and enduring passion. They only speak of wanting to be together, and his resisting divorcing my mother, and her divorcing her husband, and on and on. The drama is between lovers and a room full of ghosts.

My own life during that time was eventful, as most are, between the ages of 16 and beyond. I graduated from school, and the various degrees of university; I travelled to Europe a few times, I studied at the Jung Institute in Zurich,

I returned, I married and divorced (and all the related catastrophes), I found and lost God, I got on various committees, got jobs, moved on, and on. All these events are not found in the letters I've been reading. It is as though I've occupied space in another universe to this lettered one of my father. And yet I knew him too, and he was beautifully generous to me and I loved him.

These letters are amongst various other bits and pieces I'm only now looking at. My

father died in 2007, at the great age of nearly 101. This stuff is ancient history. The lover is probably dead. It is all past.

In amongst the letters is a very evocative little fairy tale written by my father in 1972. It's a story about two lovers. She who married and had children, but hadn't really found love, and he who longed for the "perfect" woman and had not yet discovered "even the shadow of one" and they met "almost by accident" and it was like "two stars melting into one". Quote, unquote.

For the likes of me, a psychotherapist, the tale is interesting. It bespeaks of a mind stuff (even a mind field) populated by notions of "perfect women", as if there were such ephemeral beings. This tale is placed together in this collection of letters, of hers, and copies of my father's letters to her (for that was the kind of man he was: he wrote out, without carbon paper – there were no photocopiers – copies of every letter he wrote this lover of his).

Why he kept all these letters, I don't know. Perhaps he thought he would defy death and live forever, perhaps he didn't know what to do with them, or maybe he actually did want me to read them. I shall never know his intent. His fairy tale fantasy does



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell  
M. Couns., PhD

make mention of his hope that other generations will know the kind of love of which he experienced.

Mmm. This is all very well, and I am glad to have read these letters, but my actual impression of them though is not that it is a saga of true and perfect love, but years and years and years and years of one person trying to say to the other, "Hey, I'm just an ordinary person, and not the personification of 'the perfect woman'". Hey, I shop, I eat, I get sick, I travel, I have problems with my kids, I drink – probably far too much, I smoke – yeah I know that's really bad – I care for my aged mother, I go to parties, I don't get invited to some parties – because of our illicit relationship, etc, etc." And the other person says, "I've never loved another as I love you. You are the, my, perfect woman."

This is the crux of the matter. Here is a love story

that is probably all about projections and a room of ghosts, with very occasional brushing against the ordinary world.

You see, I heard it all from the next room, the arguments, the crying and all that between my parents, even the words, "Don't tell Liz." I was a teenager then and I did not know, nor could find my voice for many years after this in how to say, "I do know, and do not like it."

In the warped wisdom of my parents at the time when I was sixteen and when the great love affair of thirty years and more between the woman who was not my mother and my father had just begun, they thought it a good idea to send me to a psychologist. I'm very, very glad they did, for seeing the psych gave me my eventual freedom from the ghosts in the room.

From that time forth I have been seeking authenticity: how to be real, clear and direct, all my life. It is likely that this is what drives me to do the work I do with my clients. I like the clarity that being real brings, and I like the freedom that is made manifest. It is like the opening of the doors, the letting in of the light and air and the multiple choices that reveal themselves. It is the clearing, and it is wonderful.

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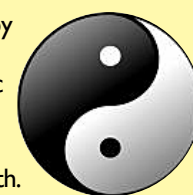
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# Birth and Beyond

by Kirrah Holborn

Out of the mouths of babes!  
A simple yet beautiful drawing created by a 5-year old girl has been seen by nearly 500,000 people around the world. I wasn't expecting such a fantastic response when I shared it on my Traditional Wisdom facebook page, but the comments are all really positive. Most people find it amusing and many agree that this depiction of birth is very helpful for normalising birth in our culture.

A few themes started to emerge through the thousands of comments flooding in. It brought up the current culture around birth, active and upright birth positions, siblings at birth and what we are teaching our children.

Doulas of France said that this is a "powerful transmission from mother to daughter". Georgia's perspective of birth is so natural and simple.

Birth in our culture

Comments came from all over the world with the most popular languages being; English, Spanish, Portugese, French, German, Slovenian and Hebrew. It made me ponder what birth in other cultures looks like too.

'Midwives first' said, "Contrary to what many people might think, birth doesn't have to be scary or traumatizing, it can be a beautiful natural part of life." A Portugese commentator said she loves that this child has escaped from the current collective unconscious about childbirth. Many birth depictions are of a woman lying flat on her back being surrounded by doctors and medical equipment.

'Meet me at my happy place' said, "Fear comes from the unknown and the unfamiliar. So, by not sharing how birth is it leads to insecure women full of doubt and fear."

Where do babies come from?

Some parents are more open than others when sharing the details of

how babies are made and where they come from. A Portugese follower said, "We're all born. Why not face the naturalness of the act? Birth is a natural phenomenon and should be explained as such," and others agreed with this. The more we can normalise (even celebrate) birth, the more confidence our young ones will have when it comes time for them to be birthing.

People commended the mother for teaching her daughter about the beauty and power of birth in all its glory.

This is a great position for birth!

Georgia's drawing is an awesome representation of natural birth and in particular active birth. One of my favourite birth workers, Gail Tully, said the maternal position works wonders for helping babies come out!

Another commentor said, "This is such a positive contrast to how birth is often portrayed." It opened up conversation about women giving birth in upright positions – standing, squatting, kneeling, hands and knees and the use of birth stools.

'Safe haven doula's' said, "If all women knew their options in birth, imagine how things would look! As doulas, we strive to educate women on those options, and then support them in every way possible!"

What about siblings attending births?

Many people agreed that preparing your children for birth and welcoming them into the birth space provides a great opportunity to normalise birth at a young age.

'Midwifery care NYC' said, "When a little one sees another little one being born, this builds so much confidence. Watching birth, however it unfolds, allows a realistic understanding of the power of the woman's body."

'Just Birth' said, "Children aren't frightened of birth, it's adults that destroy the beauty and miracle of birth for them. You should try to normalise birth for your children, every chance you can."



'Full spectrum midwifery' said watching a sibling being born can really shape a child's understanding of the normalcy and power of birth. Some women shared that they understand birth because they have seen their mother birth their siblings so they 'really get it'. Future generations will have more options. They believe that movement in labour works, because they've seen it at their sibling's birth.

Others reminisce on their own birth with children present: "When I was in labour with my youngest, my oldest was looking to see if he could see her head!" In fact, some children are disappointed when their mums birth in the middle of the night without waking them. One mother shared, "My daughter squealed with delight meeting her younger sister, and then immediately started crying, "but I wanted to be there when she came out!". Another mother shared that allowing her kids to watch her birth deepened the connection they have with their baby brother.

Now it makes me wonder... How would the little ones in your life draw birth?

*Kirrah Holborn provides pregnancy, birth and postpartum support in the Northern Rivers. She facilitates Birthing From Within antenatal classes, gives nurturing pregnancy massages and provides placenta encapsulation services. For the chance to win a pregnancy massage text your name and email to 0429-30- 851 or visit: [www.traditionalwisdom.com.au](http://www.traditionalwisdom.com.au)*



## Ready-made reading glasses explained

by Tina Fuller, Optometrist

Ready-made reading glasses are a good low-cost option for many people, but if you want to use them, please read this.

I so often see patients who have suffered the consequences of using ready-readers without being properly informed, so I feel I need to give people a chance to learn the facts.

We all self-medicate at times, and that's OK, as long as we have some basic knowledge of what we are dealing with. Unfortunately, these readers are usually sold with no guidance (or worse, with the wrong advice).

So I would like to share with you some typical examples of their use, and the appropriate facts.

**Patient 1** had some difficulty seeing small print, especially in poor light. After trying a friend's glasses, she bought some ready-readers for herself. When I saw her a short time later, she could not read anything without glasses, and felt she needed them for driving and TV as well.

**Fact 1:** Most people choose readers that are too strong. (The lowest available is +1.00, and often only +0.50 is needed at first). This deteriorates their eyesight too quickly, and often extends the problem to their distance vision unnecessarily.

**Patient 2** never had an eye test before, as he felt ready-readers were doing the job. When I finally saw him, he already had advanced glaucoma (despite regular marijuana use). He is now almost blind in one eye, but was lucky to get treatment in time to save the other eye.

**Fact 2:** Many people using readers neglect their regular eye tests, so serious (but treatable) eye conditions go undetected.

**Patient 3** had an eye test years ago and was told he can use ready-readers because his eyes are both the same. Has suffered frequent headaches for months. Brain scans and chiropractic treatment offered no solution. An eye test showed the cause of the headaches was a change in his prescription, and poor muscle co-ordination between his eyes.

**Fact 3:** Ready-readers are only suitable for some people in some situations. Their lenses are not always made correctly, causing distortion.

The prescription balance between your eyes, how your eyes work together, and centering of lenses in front of your pupils, are important factors not taken into account with ready-made readers, often causing headaches and visual fatigue.

Despite these issues, there is a place for such inexpensive readers, and I frequently recommend them to my patients. All I ask is that you have an eye test beforehand, so that I can advise you on the correct strength and how to tell a good pair from a dud.

I write this article to help you make an informed choice about your vision. These readers are not just "magnifiers" (their magnifying power is actually minimal – print just appears bigger because it's in focus). They are prescription spectacles sold without a prescription, and they can do harm if used incorrectly.

*Tina Fuller practices at Nimbin Optical, phone 6689-0081.*



A visit to the optometrist

## Which conditions are alleviated by Feldenkrais?

by Brent Shaub, certified Feldenkrais practitioner

Illness manifests in many insidious ways. Certainly pain and stiffness when moving lead to a reduction in activity and a lower quality of life. Motivation to start succumbs to beliefs of hopeless from accumulated inaction, and continued withdrawing will only lead to continued decline.

This doom-and-gloom need not take root, and the entrenchment of having fallen prey can be dislodged regardless of a person's current state, though the amount of practice for a severe, long-term syndrome is often more than a broken bone.

Those I've seen who have thrived have one thing in common: the will to grow. Free will is an inherent quality that's universal, through many relate to it rather differently. Those cynical about recovery (an attitude of their making) face an additional layer from these beliefs. An attitude of curiosity about one's body, mind and capabilities helps



direct one's focus towards improvement.

Paradoxically, once that direction begins, motivating one's self only by achievement can thwart progress and leave frustrated. Those able to find sustenance in a continued practice (whether successful or meaningful on any particular day or not) have the emotional constitution to weather the inevitable storms in one's life.

These attitudes pertain to the person embracing any kind of health-based practice, and having them in mind can help support a fruitful voyage in self-discovery.

From a Feldenkrais practice, what conditions are well-suited to release their choke-hold between intention

and actualisation? They go by many names – chronic pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, idiopathic muscular pain, low back pain, gait dysfunction, motor problems, neuro-muscular degeneration, bulging disks, pinched nerves, scoliosis, balance issues—yet their commonality is related to the neuromuscular-skeletal system.

Feldenkrais provides direct experiences of using one's self in efficient ways which give clear sensory messages about one's able capacity. Better organisation can reduce limitations and enable productive somatic building.

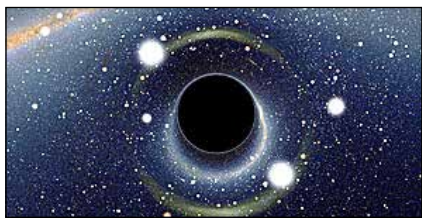
Those with the courage to start whenever they are and listen to their current needs stand a significantly high chance of making inroads towards better health. From times of having been too preoccupied with work, family or having survived an accident, injury or illness which altered the body, changes from the spritely playing as youth to the stiff, tired groans of subsequent years need to be met mindfully: completely and neutrally as possible on the

physical and emotional layers.

Self-loathing from having lost functioning can impede the required care to improve out of a rut that requires more than a few simple exercises to alleviate. Those who actively practise with an attitude of acceptance and non-judging fare better. Grasping reality when it doesn't suit is a rich ground for cultivating lasting change. The gentle, respectful, pertinent movements of the Feldenkrais Method can alleviate many movement-based conditions which are too often written off as permanent.

If you would like to have direct experiences and find out if Feldenkrais can help you, my online recordings are available at: <http://EmbodyWisdom.Today/downloads> New updates were posted the first week of April. If interested in attending a workshop in Nimbin, email: [Brent@EmbodyWisdom.Today](mailto:Brent@EmbodyWisdom.Today) or text 0404-429-271.

The pelvic floor classes in Mullum finish at the end of the month; you're welcome to attend on Wednesdays, 5.30pm at 4/104 Stuart Street. Cost: \$15/week.



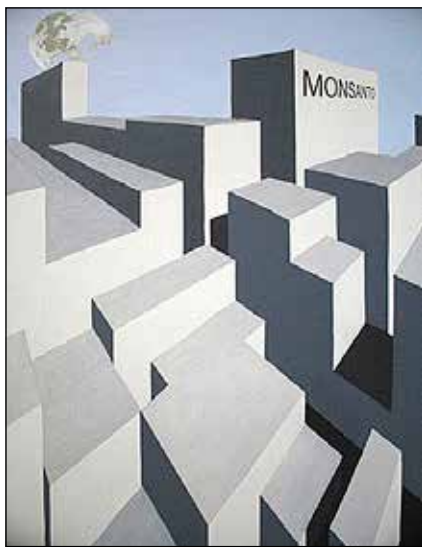
## Black Holes

The black hole  
Is the doorway to lost souls  
Our past ancestories  
Souls that were cut short of life  
Screaming to be heard

We all hit this hole  
That we fall into  
The deeper we fall  
The louder the cries

Past hurt souls connect to us, as  
We share a similar footprint  
Something sacred grows.

Rosie Dormer, Bilambil Heights



Rob Harle, 'Dying City'

# Modern mysteries

by David Ward  
Life action coach

It's time we stopped treating depression, anxiety, suicidal thinking and addiction as a mystery that only the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry have the solution to.

Recent media reports state that the suicide rate has overtaken the road toll to be the largest killer of Australians in the 18 to 44 age bracket. Against all indications from the silence out in the community, reports like this suggest that I'm not the only one to have suffered.

Having successfully taken control of these elements in my life, slowly, gradually ironed them out, I've felt the urge to document my methods and develop the Vital Choices program, in the hope that it may bring others some of this wonderful relief sooner than if they were going by their own search alone.

Those of us concerned have our own personal "recipes," so to speak, for getting into these negative states. This is the path to recovery, to look closely at this combination of behaviours we so desperately cling to, and to follow this recipe in reverse, step by step replacing all those unsuitable dependencies with the original processes that work so well.

*Avoiding overwhelm by taking this approach is crucial to success???*

Getting the evidence first hand of really feeling the benefits of these replacements and adjustments, of



how they improve the experience of life, is the fuel for patience, belief, perseverance and commitment.

I don't want to oversimplify such serious issues as these, I just want to contribute to demystifying them and to help place a possible solution in the hands of those who will benefit most, empowering them in the process.

I want to point out the seemingly obvious, that such things as depression and suicidal thinking could in many cases be seen as a message from our bodies, telling us things are so desperately unsustainable and in need of correcting and re-balancing, that we find ourselves verging on self destruct.

This underlies the importance of the de-stigmatisation of these fairly logical outcomes, freeing people to come forward and seek the help, support and answers that they need.

David Ward, Vital Choices, freedom from addiction specialist and well-being consultant: 0447-820-510.

# The biodynamics of bodywork



by Betti Wille

Let's take a look into the meaning of biodynamic as in 'Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy' or 'Craniosacral Biodynamics'. It is a crucial aspect of this therapy, and a question often asked.

The biodynamic approach to bodywork is different from the biomechanical one which refers to the application of mechanical principles to a living organism, the body. Instead, it chooses to initiate a non-hierarchical conversation with an inherent ordering principle – let's call it body-intelligence.

When the spine is out of alignment there's always a story to it – a story that cannot be overseen from the outside. The dynamics of the body could be such that an area has been shut down in

order not to feel.

Whenever we are feeling overwhelmed, our body tends to use a very clever and common strategy: shutting down. In case of a life-threatening experience the shutdown may be massive and trauma the result. Being alive as human beings we're bound to encounter various degrees of pain. Feelings of shame, guilt, fear or grief for example are not easy to deal with and likely to be "swept under the carpet". The stuff "under the carpet" tends to accumulate up to a point where we start tripping over huge piles, accident-prone and exhausted, doesn't it?

A practitioner of Craniosacral Biodynamics engages in listening to bodily expressions without the ambition to manipulate. This supplies a spaciousness that invites the nervous system to slow down radically as well as spontaneous expressions of health to arise. Body-intelligence can now take over and the *inherent treatment* plan is likely to unfold.

So what are these biodynamics expressed within our physiology? The body as a self-regulating system is highly dependent on a certain fluidity. Our nervous system is bathing in liquid. The body's information network, nutrients and

waste products rely on fluid dynamics. To facilitate efficient flow different levels of charges and concentrations are present. Emotions play a substantial role in bodily dynamics, as they are physical responses to our interpretation of a specific trigger.

This takes us to another specific of biodynamic practice which is the orientation towards resources. A resource can be anything that makes us feel good. This is communicated verbally, as feeling safe is essential for the progress of the session.

The better we can connect with our resources, the better our ability to meet challenges. In other words, when challenges are met with adequate resources in a supportive environment, they become great pile shifters, even for old "under the carpet" stuff.

Biodynamic Craniosacral practice works from the inside out. The process communicates charges of the nervous system or states of body tissues within a safe, relational setting of two people in touch. Healing work is solely done by the client's own process, supported by becoming quiet and parasympathetic, as opposed to agitated and sympathetic. The nervous

system knows its ways towards well-being when given the chance.

Today's Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy is based on osteopath William G. Sutherland's work. It was around 1950 when he began working with the subtle, tide-like movements throughout the nervous system he observed in his patients.

In a state of health, every cell of the body flows accordingly, a dance in precise order, centering round the spinal cord or body-midline. This rhythmic flow is considered to (re) produce movements of embryonic development as it organises body tissues according to the individual blueprint.

Biodynamic Craniosacral bodywork offers a gentle way to get in touch with inner realities that determine our ability to heal from injuries. Our body sensations provide the most direct experience of these realities.

*"If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place. Primary reality is within; secondary reality without."*  
—Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now*

For further information, you're welcome to contact Betti, preferably by email: [biodynamic.touch@gmail.com](mailto:biodynamic.touch@gmail.com)

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