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Shannamay - an artist's story

by Anne Cook

People often ask me "how long did it take to paint that?" My answer is simple, "All my life." I was born an artist.

I never sought out any kind of training or correction to the natural flow of my creative expression, choosing rather, to observe, follow intuitive feelings, metaphysical experiences, and nature's instruction.

People fascinate me, the human form, always, the unique vibrational energy of every living thing, birds, animals, trees, rocks.

Experiencing a country childhood, which was spent almost entirely outdoors wild and free, nature's child, strongly feeling the energies all around me, observing and merging with my environment was, I believe, a blessing.

Mud pies in the backyard, my first form of sculpting.

Mothering started young, most of those busy years were lived in the hills of Nimbin, where my home and garden were my canvas. There I created beautiful gardens, growing roses, healing herbs, food, with my beautiful home-grown and home-educated children, magical and free.

From there, with children grown, my focus shifted to painting and sculpting. Later, after the devastating loss of

all my possessions and life's art works in a fire, I found myself seeking refuge and direction, spontaneously flying to the other side of the planet. During this time, I met wonderful artists and ancient trees, throughout my wanderings.

For now, though I am back home, Nimbin, the beauty of the mountains at my front door, the countryside and the unique nature that is Nimbin, good medicine.

My days are spent almost entirely outside in my garden, in nature, gardening, planting, painting or sculpting.

I am constantly moved and inspired by the dance of life, the incredible way we move through the hardest, the most despairing of times, as well as the grand celebration of life.

The thousands of women I've had personal contact with throughout my life that have shared their personal experiences, their own unique frequency, many stories, have all made some mark on my canvas, influenced my subject matter, their struggles, as well as my own, have gifted me the power to see beauty even in despair.

I dip my brush into those feelings, those energies, and spread them on a canvas or express through clay sculpting.

Authenticity is true beauty, and my only intent is to bring



Below: Artist self-portrait and 'Face of the Flood'



this to view with love.

My next exhibition will be a body of work I am currently creating, about "the Face of the Flood" people whom I have come in contact with, and documenting their story in portraiture.

Shannamay is the Nimbin Artists Gallery Artist of the month for August.

Please come and view her work, we are open 7 days a week from 10am to 4pm.

This year's fibre show

Fabulous Fibre – The Fibre Show will continue at Blue Knob Hall Gallery until Saturday 13th August. The exhibition has continued to change over the years as artists use new and old forms of transforming fibre (natural manmade or recycled) into the everyday items that we use, wear or admire.

This year's *Fibre Show* has been well received once again and a central piece in the exhibition has been Djuana Leiselle's 'Quetzalcoat Hat, Hat and Medicine Bag'. This striking and colourful coat, and accessories have been a 12-year project and has caught the eye and the interest of everyone who has walked in the door.

This exhibition has everything from the refined and beautifully woven jackets and scarves of Wendy Cartwright, and Kim Jones - 'The Wild Weaver' whose hand spun, dyed and woven jackets use the 'Zero Waste' sewing method - showcases two women who are masters of their craft. There is still plenty to see at this annual exhibition which is dedicated to this wonderful multi-faceted medium.

Two new exhibitions 'Less is More' in the Main Gallery, and 'Time's Almost Up' by Amelia de Zwart in The Solo Space will open in August. The 'Less is More' theme has been inspired by what has been happening in the world around us and in our immediate neighbourhood. This theme covers a multitude of ideas with many of us often wanting less or more of something in our lives. From the most

serious big issues affecting our planet to the smallest details of our lives, our wants and needs, this theme is open to any interpretation by the artists.

Amelia (Milly) de Zwart is a 17-year old artist who practices a mix of different arts - sculpting, crocheting, painting and drawing. Her exhibition 'Time's Almost Up' consists of a multiple array of artworks that have been created over the past two years. These focus on the effects of our footprint on this world, and how the flora and fauna are affected by humanity.

Both exhibitions will run concurrently from Thursday 18th August with an Opening event on Sunday afternoon on 21st August.

For more information, contact Blue Knob Hall Gallery on 02 6689-7449 or email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au



'Too Much is Never Enough' by Amanda Doran



Quetzalcoat Hat & Hat by Djuana Leiselle



Amelia de Zwart, 'Time's Almost Up' in the Solo Space

The space between us

by Ruth Tsimbinis

It began with the opening lines of a Beatles song *Within You Without You* to turn into an exhibition concept for five local artists to pivot off their creative ideas.

Carmen Hogue, Marion Arent, Maryanne Shea, Keith Cameron and Rick Molloy took the opening lines from this song to focus their collaboration on a new body of individual art works for a group exhibition at the Roxy Gallery.

'The Space Between Us All' became the title of their group exhibition, along with the reflecting point at the Roxy Gallery from 4th to 28th August.

Having exhibited together at one time or another as part of larger group exhibitions, all five artists decided they would like to tackle a concept that brought together their individual interpretations of this principle, which is very much a part of themselves and their interaction with all that is around us.

This exhibition will feature both paintings and sculptures, and although the art practice of each artist is diverse, there is a harmonious narrative running throughout all of the works that expresses their individual understanding of 'The Space Between Us All'.

The official opening will be held on Saturday 6th August, 1 to 3pm where the artists will talk about their works.

Roxy Gallery is currently seeking expressions of interest from individuals or groups of creative folk wishing to be involved in the 2023 exhibition program. Proposals from artists at all stages of their careers are being sourced for our exhibition program, based on shows running from 4 to 6 weeks,



'Silent Road' by Maryanne Shea

commencing from February 2023.

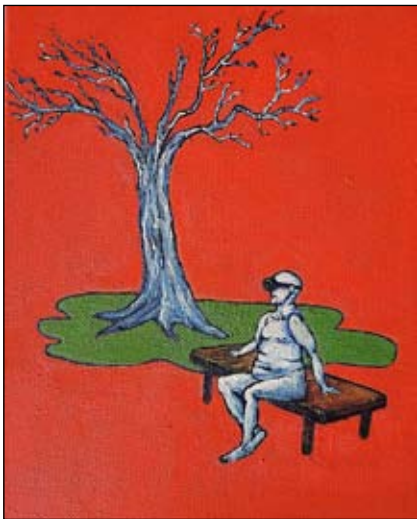
A panel of art industry peers assesses applications, and all applications will be considered on merit, based on support material, images and text submitted with the Application Criteria.

Applications are on-line at: www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/recreation-community/community-facilities/roxy-gallery

For more detailed information about making an application contact: roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au

Roxy Gallery is also seeking expressions of interest from Aboriginal artists living in and around the Kyogle region to be part of the Dalaang Galii Wogun exhibition, as part of the Dalaang Galii Wogun Festival in Kyogle on Saturday 22nd October.

This exhibition will provide artists with a fantastic opportunity to promote their artworks and develop their creative profile. Expressions of interest close on 15th August. See: <https://artsnorthernrivers.com.au/eois-open-for-dalaang.../>



'The Head Set' by Rick Molloy



'Water Bird' by Marion Arent

Serpentine Gallery on the move

by Corinne Batt-Rawden

Serpentine Community Gallery is hosting a Pop Up Gallery at World Square, as invited guests of the Sydney Fringe Festival for the month of September. If you're down that way, come and visit us at the Sydney Fringe Festival.

Serpentine is showcasing four artists who all had their solo exhibitions cancelled due to the floods and subsequent repairs to our gallery. It is going to look fabulous when we are done though.

We are starting with a double exhibition from 1st through to 10th September. Artist Inara Kent presents her exhibition 'Nature Within Nature Without' with her exploration of nature, particularly the rainforest caldera area of the northern rivers, where she has lived for many years.

Inara's work explores relationships with others, current issues, but especially Nature. Her artworks reflect a kinship with the natural world using elements of printmaking, collage, colourful acrylic paints, inks and unique ceramic earrings.

Her depictions can be viewed as a perception of an emotional connection

to place rather than a representation of a realistic locality. Her visual focus celebrates the natural environment's influence as being both a source of joy and recognition of something greater at work in her life.

Joining her will be Rachael Windress, with her exhibition titled 'Unseen'. Rachael is a fine art photographer who's passionate about creating dynamic, non-figurative, in-camera illusions.

Her images are captured using interesting objects, experimental and fibre optic lighting and gels, and unique perspectives and exposures, all in a controlled environment.

These dynamic images, with elements of intrigue and surprise, are true photographs, not digitally manipulated images. For her, design software is commandeered as the digital darkroom rather than as a passive image processor. She believes the camera is a powerful tool, and with the right expertise has unlimited potential.

In the meantime, if you need your Serpentine Gallery fix you can find us at the Lismore Car Boot markets on the first and third Sundays of the month,



'Night Flight' by Inara Kent



'Dynamism' by Rachael Windress

and at the Channon Craft Market on the second Sunday of the month. Stop by and say hello while we have this opportunity to be out in the community.

If you would like to be

involved, volunteers are welcome to join and artists are welcome to register with the gallery. Feel free to contact the Gallery on 0492-964-819 or email: gallery@serpentinearts.org

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A moment

by S Sorrensen

I can see fish darting in and out of the coral. All types of fish. All sizes, all colours. It's like Nemo, except they're not talking. It's noisy though...

I wish I'd paid more attention to the sign on the beach which gave names to the fish. Paying attention is important to me. I like to be a conscious person. It's mindfulness. I don't like people who aren't mindful.

But this time, I didn't take much notice of the names attached to the images of the many fish to be found among the coral surrounding this very small island in New Caledonia. I guess I was too eager to just get into the water and snorkel. It was hot, not unbearably, but the warm winter sun above was heating me, bouncing off the cool, clear water and winking at me, inviting me to her.

Or maybe, if I was to delve deeper into my mental processing, I would find that I was just eager to get into the water and snorkel so I could then get out of the water and go to the beachside bar and grab a Numero 1 beer (the local



ale), which was also inviting me to her.

I did take time, though, while at the sign, to check if requin (French for 'shark') was listed among the many fish.

No, it wasn't. Bon.

Despite the reality of my approaching mortality becoming more apparent with the days (and years) slipping by with increasing speed, I don't want to die from shark bite. Ethically, it would be cool – nourishing a threatened species while diminishing a toxic one – but I avoid pain. Always have. Hence the beer thing, I guess...

Anyway, I'm in the refreshing water and not sparing a moment to think of people back home in rain and

wind and cold (that's you, dear reader). I'm checking out the barely bleached coral and the slightly diminished variety of fish darting about in the hardly noticeably warming waters, when the intensity of the underwater noise grabs my focus.

It's a strange high-pitched, feedbacky sound that stops abruptly when I lift my head from the water, but restarts as soon as I dip below the surface again. It's very loud, squealing and whistling in my ears.

What could possibly create such a cacophony in my ears?

Is it a whale pod singing? Is it the whine of the water taxi's twin outboards? Have the French built a secret sonic weapon beneath this peaceful marine reserve so

as to launch an international offensive to reclaim their rightful position as the world's dominant culture?

Or is it the new normal: the sound of an ocean filled with warships, fish harvesters, sea-bed miners, all using sonar, all filling the oceans with noise?

I lift my head above the water to see if anyone else is freaked by this sound.

The sound stops as my head clears the water. I look around at the other snorkelers. Everyone seems unperturbed: they're all heads down, flippers splashing.

Am I the only one here old enough to remember when the ocean was relatively quiet? Or have we all become so accepting of the awful consequences of our ruthless exploitation of the planet, that we just tolerate this marine aural pollution? Why are people so unconscious of what they do? Where is mindfulness, people?!

Really, it's all too much.

I put a finger to my ear.

Oh...

Oh dear.

I swim back to shore, head above water, hoping that somehow my hearing aids might survive their underwater excursion.

Life skills

In the dreaming

The first Australians, in timeless time, in a world of harmony and rhyme. Roles and duties, belonging, knowing, seasons, cycles, warmly flowing. Living skills refined for survival, in tuneful touch, refreshing revival.

Now dreaming

In an ideal world, it's much the same, life skills established for the great game, equality for all, rich and poor, all that you need, and if needed, more.

Realities

Expectation and exploitation, limited mobility, a sense of futility. Though we all deserve a fair go, the rich preserve the status quo, with too much milk and honey, for those who smell of money.

More dreaming

Create a normality enhancing vitality, rearrange for progressive change. Avenues open and available for all, awakening, awareness, answering the call. Feeling complete and part of the whole, our world balanced, in harmony, body and soul.

– John Stuart

Stand down now

It's hard not to feel for Lismore's new mayor. Like so many other Lismorians this year he is suddenly and completely out of his depth, he's drowning in a job that he doesn't have the experience or nous to undertake.

To his credit he has openly admitted on national television that the council he leads needs to be removed. He's right. He should resign.

There are a number of councillors with many terms of experience and with profound experience leading us through major disasters. He and his gaggle of newbies should stand aside and let our actual community leaders lead.

Never before have we required strong local voices to advocate for us at a state and federal level as we do now.

Never before have we needed strong local voices to take up the cudgels in our battles with insurance companies looking for loop holes to deny their obligations.

Never before have we ever needed our community leaders to reimagine and transform our world as we do now; to look at the new reality of the climate



Revenge of the Loon
by Laurie Axtens

crisis and put in place the mechanisms to empower us now and into the future.

Let's be clear, it was the empowered community that saved our lives in February. It wasn't the government and its agencies. They came up short. They failed catastrophically.

Remember, 000 put us on hold! While our neighbours saved us out the window.

The last thing we need now is to throw ourselves at the mercy of these same mob of administrative muppets.

Stand down Steve, for our sakes and yours, stand down now.

Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

Mankind may go on for a long time, spreading all over the Milky Way, prospering. But it may be the end of the road for Homo Sapiens, and the beginning of Homo Universalis, combining head with heart, reason with feeling.

Carl Linnaeus lived in sexist times, naming humans 'Wise Man'. He forgot about our better halves, love, and so his person was wise, but had no empathy for anyone but his own clan. He did not realise the heart has braincells too. Logic dictated: use anything easy.

The world was divided into warring nations, competing faiths, subjugated in class and colour. When Linnaeus was alive, people still fought duels, incest was not against the law, cannibalism was practiced in 'primitive' parts of the world.

He was a great botanist, but many of his contemporaries were arrogant and cruel. He lived before the Napoleonic wars. A contemporary of Adam Smith, he lived in an era of Christian 'superiority' in the West.

Every tribe thought, and preached, that their 'God' favoured them above all others.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of Homo Sapiens is what he ate: other mammals.

Opportunist nonsense. Gladiators, were often vegan. The largest land animals, elephants, bison and rhinoceros, etc., are herbivores. Strong as an ox, we say.

Plant proteins, like animal proteins, are... proteins. It is not a matter of food, health, budget or nourishment, it is a matter of learned taste, of training.

Hunting skills, and working in clans, served mankind. Civilisations are built on similar interests. But it also made some people opportunistic, sly, who learned the temporary advantage of stabbing some in the back when they are not useful anymore. Predatory behaviour. Religious morals and laws caution against asocial behaviour.

The economy now is also predatory. It is not just the clever or entrepreneurial, but the slyer or luckier, the richer.

The wealthiest men in history were not entrepreneurs, but conquerors, like Caesar and Genghis Khan. They 'confiscated' gold from others.

Adam Smith's moral reasoning eventually begat crony capitalism, a free trade Global Village. While nearing best practices at times, it could be run by ruthless crooks.

Most omnivores are decent, law-abiding people, raised by good, loving

parents. But no one is worth ten thousand times average wages.

While humanity as a whole is subject to Darwinian competition, individuals are not.

Social security allows individuals to live protected. As Stephen Hawking and many others show, being 'disabled' does not mean being without value to society.

And humanity is entering an age of genetics, where people can buy outstanding skills for their progeny. DNA is no longer a contest between bloodlines.

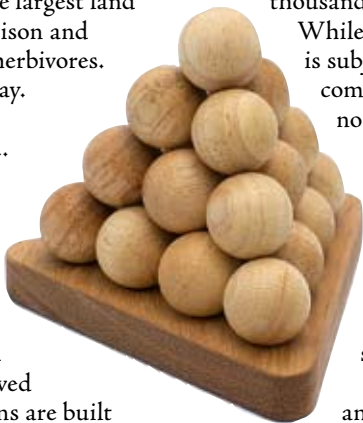
The economy is now vicious because many participants eat vicious food, meals with opportunist predator chemicals in bloodstreams.

As if domestication of animal friends gives people the right to abuse: we made the chicken, cows or pigs, so we can consume them. It is an opportunist argument: might is right, or 'we can 'domesticate' because we consider ourselves superior'.

They don't speak English.

There are over eighty million herbivore humans today. That has to grow at least to six and a half billion before the Global Village can vote democratically to enact Ahimsa laws.

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Nimbin celebrates NAIDOC Day with song, dance and stories

by Teresa Biscoe

We had a fantastic day on 8th July celebrating NAIDOC Day in Allsopp Park.

After the Survival Day march into the park, we experienced the smoking ceremony and heard a great introduction from local respected culture man Gilbert Laurie, who gave some home truths about the impact that colonisation has had on the indigenous people and culture of this country.

Steve Didge and the Widjabal Dancers provided some fine traditional song, music and dance reminding all of us of the rich cultural traditions that are still being practised today.

Then we were treated to the classic golden country tones of Billie Smith, the powerful and lyrical songs of Blakboi, a didge duo with Roland and Tiago, and well-known and loved duo Monkey and the Fish to finish up.

The beautiful artwork of the NAIDOC banner painted by Oral Roberts and Daniel (Boon) Wilson formed a perfect backdrop for the performers.

Once again Nicolette and Ryan from the Nimbin Cultural Centre, with volunteers from the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre and the CWA Nimbin Branch, put on an



Photo: Chibo Mertineit

amazing feed for all who were there.

This day would not be possible without community support and partnerships: the Nimbin Aboriginal Culture Centre, the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre, the Nimbin Community Centre and the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation all contributed to the organisation and funding of the day, with various groups coming out to support on the day.

Many thanks to the Rainbow Power Company for the use of their marquee, the Ngulingah Nursery, NACRS, Spotty Girl face painter and Jullums program for their support and the stalls on the day.

There was also great support

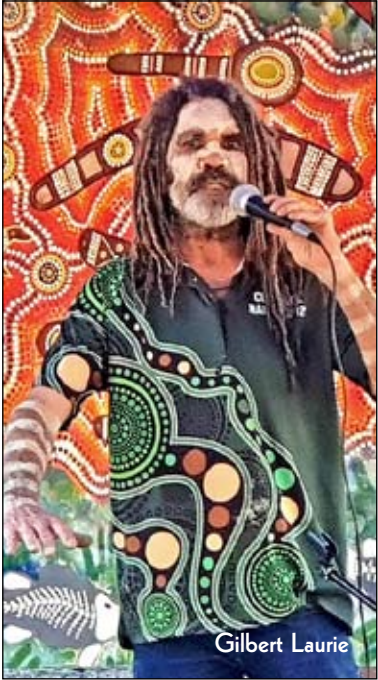


The Ngulingah Nursery stall
Photos: Sue Stock

for the signing of support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart from those who attended and we hope that the village community will continue to support Indigenous

rights, identity, culture and practice.

The Nimbin Community Centre is proud to continue to support the annual Nimbin NAIDOC celebration and pledges its support



Gilbert Laurie

for the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its full implementation.

If anyone has any photos of the day they would like to share with us, that would be great. You can email any images to the Nimbin Community Centre and we will share them with all those who supported this event.

This day would not be possible without the funding from the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Indigenous Aboriginal Affairs Agency.

Rehoming... a subject close to home

by Donna Connolly

I've chosen this topic as it is a subject fraught with emotion. And with a lot of lives changing with the weather events, many people and pets have parted ways, both temporarily and permanently.

Have you ever had to rehome a beautiful soul that has become a part of your life? It seems that everyone has an opinion...

Just watch the vitriol come thick and fast if you see a post on social media. Very rarely are the comments useful, quite often they state the obvious, and can be hurtful and personal in nature.

From a human perspective, in a lot of cases, it isn't a spur-of-the-moment decision. There has been much deliberation, heartache, long conversations and sleepless nights.

Sadly, I've heard of people having all of their animals euthanised, rather than cop the backlash and heartache of rehoming their precious friends.

"Free to good home." How does this sentence make you feel? Do you think they need to try harder, that they haven't explored all their options? Why? What happened?

When did we become so judgemental? There is usually a major event or catalytic moment where they realize that the current situation



is no longer working for all involved.

Some of the reasons for rehoming I have encountered are:

- Health issues for the animals or guardian;
- Death in the family;
- Living situation has changed;
- The animal doesn't get on with another animal or human, potentially endangering them;
- Mental health issues;
- Can't keep the animal properly contained for the health and safety of themselves and others;
- Financial hardship;
- Mobility issues;
- Unexpected accidents;

- New family member, eg baby;
 - Domestic violence situations;
 - Allergies; and
 - Objectionable behavior.
- Obviously, there are people who don't really have an "acceptable" reason, and some seem to be serial offenders. In these cases I find it is a better outcome for the animals anyway.

From an animal perspective, they really are content and happy being loved, cared for and well fed, with comfortable lodgings.

Animals are resilient creatures, and in some cases actually know who their new guardians will

be or what their new living arrangements are, and can express this in telepathic messages. I have been doing some work in Animal shelters and the animals have the answers to most of the questions.

Part of their gifts and soul contracts include enduring situations, hardships and multiple "owners" in order to assist us with our life-lessons, personal growth and to discover our soul purpose.

When I communicate with animals that have had multiple homes, their stories usually have a theme, and quite often there are commonality between the animals and guardians.

In some cases even the same start in life or similar illness, giving each other a unique empathy, anxieties that can be worked through together.

It really is wonderful to see two souls engage, mirror and essentially save one another.

Next time you feel triggered by something. Ask how you can help? Can you share the post? Did a vision of someone you know come to mind when you saw the picture? Pass the information on.

I really hope you don't have to rehome your best friends. However, if you do, may your decision be met with understanding. The world could really use some more kindness and compassion. There is already more than enough judgement and opinion.

And if you have some room

in your heart and home, please consider rescuing a shelter animal. Your life will be a whole lot richer for the experience.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about your furred, feathered or finned friends.

Often times the animals may have an idea of where their next abode, or people are.

It is always a universal lesson of letting go and trusting that these innocent souls will go where they are

meant to. It is the ultimate selfless act.

Animal communication is fantastic for understanding behaviors, situations and any trauma carried forward. While Reiki is powerful in releasing and transforming anxiety and trauma from previous existence.

Email: rivergem88@gmail.com

Website : rivergem.com.au

Facebook : [RiverGemReadings](https://www.facebook.com/RiverGemReadings)

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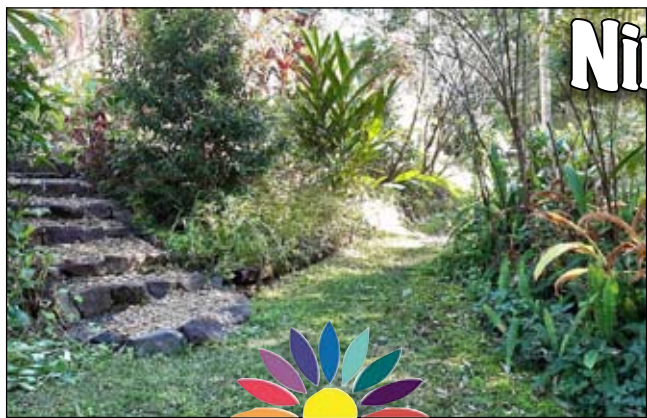
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Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

It was a mild sense of disbelief that accompanied the 30 or so garden club members as they wandered the half acre parcel of land belonging to Cherie and Russell. Finally, we had a warm sunny day with no wind and we were going to enjoy our time in the sun.

When Russell and Cherie bought the property three and a half years ago, they had

intended to style it in the fashion of a Japanese garden but that plan changed. Instead, Cherie led us along pathways that wound around various garden beds in a gentle descent from the house down toward the road.

On our way to the place where the chickens spend their winters in a 'sun trap' defending the property against invading weeds, we saw Cherie's meditation 'centre' built out of material scavenged from a skip and saved from landfill.

In the summer the chickens will be moved to the orchard closer to the road where passers-by often toss them food.

On the tier below, Russell's raised garden beds grow vegetables that include the rare leafy green ones even Maccas can't find, lettuces. He plans to install more raised garden beds as it was only the raised beds that survived the great wet and produced food.

Russell, described by Cherie as a food growing genius, will add

beans in the coming season and grow them on trellises in the new beds. The only problem is a large paper bark tree that thrived in the rain and now throws a shadow over the garden beds.

Now we were something of a rudderless ship. Our scheduled garden had to be cancelled due to unforeseen water problems, and our President was laid low with flu.

Our secretary and official photographer were also unable

to attend and the surviving committee members, after giving Cherie and Russell six days' notice of our visit, forgot to give them a much needed bottle of Red.

The good news is our AGM was also postponed so all those anxious to join the committee will have their opportunity when we next meet at Anne-Marie's, Lot 10/924 Blue Knob Road on Saturday 20th August at 2pm.

As usual, bring a chair and a plate to share. Guests welcome.

Rain plays havoc again for Nimbin Bushwalkers



by Peter Moyle

Our schedule is again all over the place. The wet weather has returned, bringing on changes. National Parks are doing their audits of conditions and facilities have restricted access.

As I write, our planned weekend at Black Rocks is looking a bit iffy. The showers and rain will hopefully clear Friday night, so instead of arriving Friday we decided to set up camp on Saturday and walk in the afternoon, and then back on schedule for Sunday morning's walk, and then home Monday.

As you see, looking at our walks planning, besides the monthly day walks we often have a weekend away with walks each day. This gives us a few days to enjoy our great National Parks, and the private properties we have access to.

With great locations, good company, and relaxing times, they are always popular. Some people just come for the day walks. It's great having options.

In early July, we spent a day at Rocky Creek dam and part of the Nightcap National Park. There are some beautiful walks through remnants of



"The Big Scrub"; all the better on a gorgeous, sunny, winter's day.

We did a lot of scrambling as the number of trees down was considerable, the remnants of the wild weather we have had this year. This area is easily accessible and a great picnic area as well.

I highly recommend it for a day out with family or friends.

Walks programme

Sunday 7th August
38/38 and the Hidden Valley – Whian Whian State Conservation Area

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498
Meet: 9am Rummery Park camp area near Minyon Falls in the Whian Whian SCA. We were out this way earlier in the year and have decided to return to these beautiful valleys. There will be some scrambling over rocks and some steep climbs up and down, suitable for experienced walkers only. If in doubt ring Peter for advice.
Bring: water, lunch, and hat. Good



walking footwear essential. Do ring Peter as we may need to change this walk due to access.

Thursday 18th to Monday 22nd August
Mulligans Campground, Gibraltar Range National Park

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498
Grade 3-4: Another of our great camp weekends. Camp for as many nights as you like, some going for 2 others 4. Cost \$6 per person per night; day walks will start at 9.00am. Located west of Grafton about 3 hours from Ballina and Kyogle. This is a lovely camp area with sites well apart with fireplaces, showers and flushing toilets. We may book the group site. National Park vehicle pass required, \$8 a day or buy an annual one. Camping \$12 per person per night. Ring ASAP to reserve your spot.

Plant of the month



Australian teak
Flindersia Australis

by Richard Burer

A glorious tree to 40 metres, Australian Teak is a common tree in the Nimbin area and the Northern Rivers.

Pictured is a Teak growing in a paddock with several others near Mt Burrell, north of Nimbin. These trees remind us that much of our flood plain and adjoining ecotones was once in parts lowland subtropical rainforest, which is now a threatened EEC.

This species can also be found in dryer rainforest types and grows as far north as the Whitsunday coast in Queensland, and as far south as Kempsey.

Teak trees have often survived the axe and the bulldozer as they were often

recognised as excellent shade trees in grazing paddocks. They can also be found on the edges of farms and close to farm houses. Remnant / regrowth trees are common.

A popular tree for landscaping and an overall good survivor, Australian teak can be found planted by roadsides in places like North Lismore and Casino.

Slow growing but rewarding, Australian teak is an excellent tree for the farm, in parks and landscaped areas, and of course restoration projects.

*Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based local natural area restoration contractor and consultant:
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Planning to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival over 10 days in May 2023. Any ideas for events in our 12 focus areas welcome. Contact: aquariusnetworking@gmail.com

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Natural horsemanship

by Suzy Maloney

Everyone has heard this term by now, but what does natural horsemanship mean? To most it means a break away from the traditional way of doing things with horses, being gentler and more considerate of the horse. It most definitely is this, plus it can be much more.

In my work I describe myself as doing natural horsemanship so that people have an idea of where I'm coming from, but it's not the whole story. Horsemanship and riding is not completely natural, only a horse running free in the wild in a herd is natural.

When we enclose a horse in a paddock and start handling them we are changing to a degree the nature of the horse. I have been fortunate to have a number of brumbies enter my life.

One of these was a five-year-old stallion when he was captured. He is pure horse. The handling he has received has given him a layer of domestication on the outside, but inside he is pure wild horse.

I love this in him and would never try to remove it. He has shown me clearly just how much we affect horses when we domesticate them. I have nothing but respect for him and I now realise that on the inside of every domestic horse, sometimes buried deeply but always there, is that same essence of pure natural horse.

When we interact with horses the

biggest positive thing we can do for them is listen. There are some things we do with horses that are so outside their realm of understanding that we have to go to enormous lengths to teach them.

And there are other things that just make sense to the horse, even if it's the first time they're presented with it. I feel these things are more natural for a horse, they're more horse and less human.

I try in my handling and training with horses to discover and do those things that horses naturally understand. By listening to the horse, that is, being totally aware of their responses physically, mentally and emotionally, it's possible to tune in to when something makes sense to them and when it's totally alien.

If something is totally alien to a horse, I then ask myself how invested am I in this thing? Perhaps it's unnecessary anyway? Some horse training is done to get horses to do things that make us look clever, to win ribbons or to satisfy our egos. If we want to be considerate of the horse, perhaps we could look more to interacting with them in a way that's natural to them. And perhaps that means letting go of some things. I

find that by treading a more natural path with horses, the journey we're meant to have with that particular horse may be different to our original pre-conceived idea, but can ultimately be much more rewarding and enriching.

I recently had a student make the comment, 'I didn't expect to be



progressing so well with what we do together, I thought it would be hard work.' This explains it all to me.

If we're working with the horse instead of trying to force a round peg into a square hole, they may progress just as far with much less work and stress on everyone's part.

If it's natural to the horse, the horse has already got it, they don't need a lot of training. Once the human gets it, they've both got it. In this situation the saying 'less is more' explains the principle perfectly.

What you do with a horse that arises from an intuitive space, rather than a head space, is always going to be lighter and more considerate. And then it can flow, naturally.

Then it can be called 'natural horsemanship.'

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The characteristics of personality

by Les Rees

When I'm focused on working and being around animals, my brain engages on a subconscious level. I personally don't actually think about the way I interact with them as I carry out the daily tasks of feeding and grooming etc.

But today I became aware that my subconscious approach to each horse was governed by their individual characteristics.

Some horses are quite sensitive and have a stronger need for attention that can stem from many sources depending on personality, character, past experiences and health issues.

My "in your face" horse constantly seeks attention, and can be very expressive about what he wants. The interesting thing is that he's extremely sensitive in the way he likes to be handled and I'm pretty sure that if he was handled roughly, he could become very defensive.

He's sensitive to touch when compared to the other horses, so massaging him has to be light. However, if something specific is off-kilter, he wants me to go in hard, no holds barred, and he will let me know when he's had enough.

He's also super intelligent and very alert to his surroundings, but doesn't show any signs of the strong



The mini-herd

flight behaviour associated with sensitive horses.

I often find myself thinking that there is a pattern associated with these characteristics in other horses and think that this type has the potential to be good herd leaders. I think of them as the 'passive alert' type of horses and these are the ones I love to work with because they keep you on your toes!

Gypsy, on the other hand, is calm and resolute. She rarely shows extreme emotions and is the one who controls the herd using subtle signs of communication to the others when she wants them to do anything.

She likes to keep her distance and is very measured in her responses to the things going on around her. It's as if she's aware of everything that's going on but sits back to see how things are panning out.

However, when provoked enough she is capable of delivering an unexpected

swift rebuke. Fortunately this doesn't happen very often because of her status as matriarch of the herd, and none of the others would dare to dispute that.

The other members of our small herd are Merry and Pippin who were rescue ponies that had been traumatised when very young. Sadly, that sometimes rises to the surface for Pippin, who can become very anxious when he misreads a situation.

This is something that has helped to mould the characteristics of his personality and demonstrates how fear can easily be manifested when seeded by past traumatic events.

Mostly he is a lovable imp who loves anything involving comfort, food definitely being his favourite. Does this ring any bells?

The interesting thing about Pippin is that he is no coward and will happily engage in rough play with the others in the herd.

Finally the other mini-member of the herd is Merry. She is totally unflappable, very loving and fiercely brave. If she were human, she would be another St Joan of Arc.

If trouble is brewing, she will march up to the front ready to defend the herd which is very amusing when you think of her tiny size. She protected and nurtured Pippin when he was traumatised and still does, often leaving some of her food for him to eat.

I find it interesting because I can identify with all these characteristics, and I wonder how much of their behavioural aspects I have absorbed into my own personality.

All of the horses in my life have been amazing mentors, teaching me the language of equus and showing me how to define accurate use of energy by being present in mind as well as in body when I'm with them.

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