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Artist of the Month - Cherie Pugh



Nimbin Artists Gallery is this month featuring the work of Cherie Pugh, who has provided this introduction:

In 2016, I joined the Redcliffe Arts Society, because they were having so much fun.

In a year, I completed the beginner's art class, which taught drawing and painting with all media, and then joined their advanced watercolour class.

With little more intention than painting for my own home, I began painting large acrylic canvases of seascapes and Australian birds.

When I moved back to Nimbin in 2018, I was inspired by the stunning views on Jarlanbah to paint large acrylic canvases of mountains, forests and our local birds.

Encouraged by the Nimbin Artists Gallery, I exhibited in the Nimbin Hall for the first time with the Spring Arts exhibition in 2019, and have been a



'Jarlanbah afternoon 2'



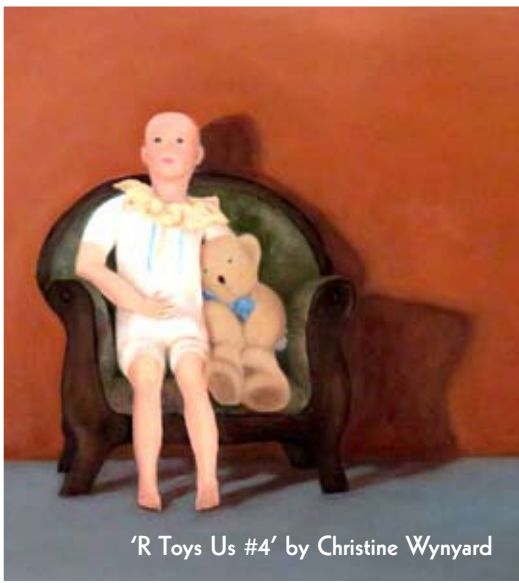
'Lorikeet'

regular since.

After a long-running series of watercolours of our local birds and mountains, I have now begun the challenge of painting Nimbin folk.

I hope you enjoy this selection of paintings from my last four years in Nimbin.

The artists' choice



'R Toys Us #4' by Christine Wynyard



'Reef Platter' by Ali Walker

This year has flown by and the last time this exhibition was able to be held was during 2020/21 programme; we are excited to have this exhibition back.

Despite such difficult times for so many in our wider community, we have been able to have some great exhibitions and a return to somewhat a sense of normalcy over the second half of 2022.

The Blue Knob Writers Group who meet each Sunday at the Gallery/Cafe had a launch of their anthology 'Sacred Landscapes' earlier in the year and have donated sales of their book to the Gallery/Hall which has been greatly appreciated.

'The Artists' Choice' is the annual show where there is no theme and artists bring in whatever they want to exhibit without the usual parameters to work to. This exhibition always has a great variety of mediums from paintings, sculpture, fibre and pottery. If you're looking for that unique gift for the festive season there is much on offer, in the Gallery and the Centre Stage crafts area.

This exhibition will be open from Thursday 8th December and run through to the first week of February. There will be no official opening for The Artists' Choice exhibition, but you can come along and enjoy an afternoon with local musician Andy Walker (pictured) for the launch of his debut album.

Local musician/singer/songwriter Andy Walker will be launching his album *Calico Moonrise* on Sunday 11th December at 2.30pm, joined on stage by Michael Skinner

for a performance of his album.

Holiday Closing Dates

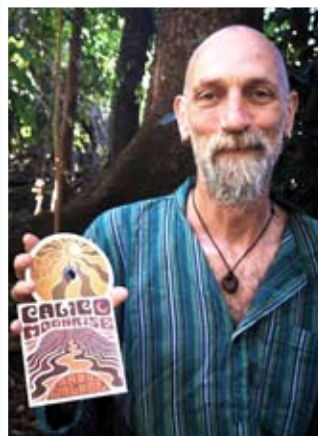
The Gallery/Cafe and Ceramic Studio will be closed from Thursday 22nd December and will be re-opening on Thursday 12th January. This is a slightly longer, well-earned break for all the volunteers.

We couldn't do this without all those wonderful people and to all the locals, regulars and visitors who help keep this unique enterprise going.

Please note: Blue Knob Cafe will close from 1pm on Sunday 11th and Sunday 18th December for private functions.

On behalf of Blue Knob Hall Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio we wish you all the best for the festive season, and look forward to bringing you more art, food and friendship in 2023.

For any enquiries, please call 02 6689-7449, email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au or check Blue Knob Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio Facebook page.



Inspiration from nature



Fleur Marsden, Grevilla series



Marita Kohl, 'Regrowth'



Kate Henson, 'Tracks'

by Ruth Tsimbinis

Finishing off this year's program of exhibitions at the Roxy Gallery is a vibrant exhibition by three women artists who moved to the Northern Rivers to immerse themselves in the natural surrounds and explore their individual interests in working in various creative forms from drawing, printmaking, and photography to sculpture.

Kate Henson, Marita Kohl and Fleur Marsden have collaborated and produced a series of individual works in colour, drawing on stories and mythology from the natural environments that surround them.

'Surrounds' opens on Saturday 17th December at 1pm. The artists will give a talk on the pieces they have contributed to this exhibition.

Their passion to create works that play on motifs from nature, such as the shapes of plants and leaves, to the patterns and rhythms created by meandering larva on eucalyptus trees.

Kate has taken her inspiration for this show from the captivating graffiti made by these tiny, illusive creatures under the bark that surrounds the tree.

Marita's studio-based practice is in mixed media ranging from painting, collage, photography to crocheting and stitching, responding to the landscapes in Australia, mixed with memories of nature and the seasons of her childhood.

Fleur has conducted studies of the natural landscape, focusing on the detail of patterns and shapes found in seedpods, bark and leaves, using multiple layers of colours to represent the intensity and emotions of an image.

'Surrounds' will be on exhibition at the Roxy Gallery until 29th January, closed on public holidays.

Together with Kyogle Council, Roxy Gallery management acknowledges the contribution made to this space by all artists, volunteers and visitors, and wish all a festive time.

Thank you all for contributing to the creative flow by showing support to the Arts, and get ready for more in 2023.

Lismore TAFE graduating artists exhibition

by Adriana Perrin

It's graduation time for the Visual Arts and Design students at TAFE NSW Lismore. After a tumultuous year of on-going disruptions, students will be celebrating their work at the Serpentine Gallery in Lismore.

Lismore TAFE Campus was submerged during February's record-breaking floods, causing major losses to campus resources and equipment. In May, regular classes resumed when students and staff moved into a temporary studio space at Southern Cross University.

Nine months on, both Advanced Diploma and Diploma of Visual Arts students, and graduates from the Diploma of Graphic Design will showcase their creations in a group show entitled 'Arc' – Artists Rising Creatively.



The students have developed bodies of work around the themes of environment, identity, family and other concerns.

Labelling themselves "submerging" artists, the students have embraced their circumstances with an attitude of tenacity and look forward to ending a tough year on a positive note.

Many of their works exhibit a strong emphasis on the traditional skills that the college is known for, while others push more innovative and contemporary strategies. The exhibition includes oil painting, printmaking, sculpture and a range of brilliant graphic designs.

The exhibition runs until 9th December at Serpentine Community Gallery, 104 Conway Street, Lismore.

Everyone is welcome, and works are for sale.

Weavers and menders gather

by Inez Price

In the circle of the valley and with the mountains around at the Nimbin Showgrounds there was a unique event which unfolded on the last weekend of November.

This was the Weave and Mend annual gathering of like-minded folk who share their knowledge, skills, friendship, and fibres over two glorious days with the theme Old Ways, New Ways.

Nimbin's own Granny Weaver Moksha, who began this movement in Nimbin many years ago, was quietly and happily observing this from a blanket under the trees. Her loyal weaving-women friends continue to celebrate this ancient art, and as the gathering and the interest grows each year there comes diversity.

The event is organised by local

weavers who bring completed artworks and huge piles of different fibres, mostly collected from the surrounding bush. Food and drinks are available and it's a free-form event with no scheduling apart from the two days together.

Weavers are happy to share knowledge on a fairly random basis. All this for a donation and a bit of a hand sometimes. This is the Old Way.

New Ways come in the form of young people, some who grew up in Nimbin, others who have travelled far, to learn new skills for a lifetime. New Ways come with discovering plant-based dyes and techniques.

With the current focus on mental health, we can do well to remember that sitting and weaving together or alone is a grounding and peaceful way to spend our time.



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A moment

by S Sorrensen

Is hope a sort of denial? A refuge against the awful reality?

I feel hope draining from me like water from the rust hole in the old corrugated-iron tank up the back. I should really get a new tank, I know, and I will, I promise, but did you know that you can't buy a metal tank these days that isn't lined with plastic? Plastic Man certainly has the ear of government.

I don't want to drink from plastic. I don't want the planet to overheat. Everything is not okay.

COP27 was the 27th formal meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties, or the Conference of the Parties (COP) for short.

From 2005, the conferences have also served as the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (or CMP for short).

Since 2016, the meeting has also served as the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (or CMA for super short). No kidding.



After working all that out recently in Egypt, leaders from countries around the globe (except Australia) flew home, exhausted from their acronymity. But action was seen to be done. Greenwashing will win the votes of the greenly gullible, and doing nothing will win the favour of the suicidal fossil-fuelled monster corporations who run the joint.

Awash in gobbledygook, drowning in ice melt, choking on industrial pollution, warming in a carbon blanket, the world spins inevitably to catastrophe. Oh dear. Everything is not okay.

I'm scared our blue jewel in the cosmos will lose its fragile light. This thought has been plaguing my waking hours, and haunting my sleep like a bad dream

which isn't a dream...

The tank up the back, despite its rust, is shining an unblemished gold in the sunset's thick amber light. Behind it, an old Angophora dances gently in the katabatic wind. A small branch falls. I sip an organic shiraz from, um, the Station Hotel in South Lismore. Not bad. This moment is okay, at least.

In 1995, I had hope for COP1 in Berlin. We are now up to COP27. Still emissions rise; increasingly our children retreat to better worlds on-line. That was a wasted hope, I reckon.

So, what can I hope for? Well, I can hope for

many things – but neckties will not suddenly tighten around the necks of all who wear them, leaf blowers will not all spontaneously

explode, world leaders will not join hands and sing songs of peace, and tradies will not turn up on time.

Can I live without hope? Won't the awful reality overwhelm me? Poison my life?

Let's see: I'm enjoying this glass of wine. Quite... shirazy. I'm getting strong fruit notes. Grape, mostly...

The sun is slipping behind the range, its yellow fingers still gripping onto my green little valley creating a pinkish bruising to the west. The bell miners have quietened, allowing airspace for the kookaburras to call last drinks. This is real, and it's okay. Pleasant.

But what about the planetary crisis?

Everything is okay. Yes, it is. And everything is not okay. That's true too. Both these realities exist at the same time, it seems.

Everything is okay. And everything is not okay. In Western psychology, we'd call it cognitive dissonance and we'd strive to resolve such seeming contradiction. As if it wasn't true.

Don't. Both these statements are true. We live with both. We are both.

It's okay to enjoy a glass of wine as the sun sets on an ailing world.

So I raise my glass to you, dear Reader, and wish you a Merry Christmas.

The man, the boy and the donkey

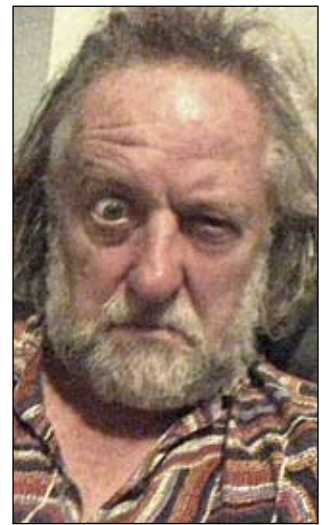
Aesop was a slave born in Greece around 620 BC with a speech impediment and a deformity, but he had a talent for confabulating stories – simple moral tales to guide us.

One of my favourites is the story of 'The man, the boy and the donkey'. In this tale the man, the boy and the donkey set out walking to market, but after listening to everyone tell them how to perform that simple feat they ended up drowning the donkey in the creek.

I often see this same approach being used in modern government policy development. I call it drown-the-donkey-governance.

In the modern story, a straightforward and obvious problem rather than being responded to in an obvious and straightforward way, requires every conceivable stakeholder or slightly interested party to have an opinion on anything being done – regularly resulting in nothing being done.

The most startling example of this is the installation of temporary emergency housing for the people of



Revenge of the Loon

by Laurie Axtens

Lismore dispossessed by the catastrophic flooding in February.

Pods were sourced, a large open place with access to services was found. And then they asked every braying donkey for their opinion. Consequently, the population of Lismore is rapidly reducing because of inadequate provision of emergency housing.

Lismore council drowned in braying donkeys... how could they but drown the donkey?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

A royal flush is a winning hand in poker, but is also what goes down the toilet of a head of state. Out with the old, in with the new. The old order is leaving, and a new one is looming. Aquarius rising. What goes down the hole, what is coming, and how to prepare?

Society and economy, organised as pyramids, are established by natural selection. States are now led by royals, emperors, presidents, dictators, parliaments, prime ministers or premiers, you name it. Based on majority well-being and backed up by police and army.

Who can lead today without laws, the cooperation of security and armour to keep emotions and opinions in line, maintaining order? The world is now in its grip.

Whatever is rattling the cage, something is coming. The consent of the governed is undermined. Another Bastille?

There are over two acres of useable land

per person today, down from eight at WWII. Even so, most people congregate in cities, where choice jobs and many services are.

Nature is in retreat. Earth is divided. There are hundreds of tribes led in various ways. Most depend on warlords, faiths or divergent cultures. In short, Earth is quarter-horsed, polluted, mismanaged.

It can't go on like this. The planet is in need of renewal. A New World Order?

The past millennia saw conflict between governments and organisations to fight over who is best, as natural selection dictates. But a united Global Village is slowly happening, peopled by a Race of Tan.

Scarcity of land and resources, causing hardship and fuelling population control programs, is from the past, when Earth was still considered the centre of the universe: a limited supply of land to be claimed by various 'God's peoples'.

But science is discovering a huge universe, and any talk of population restriction fades in the presence of the solar system and an unlimited number of exoplanets in the

galaxy.

What is expelled and what to keep?

It is not easily fixable, and lies deep in our psyche: rebalancing individual and collective survival.

Just like people know the effects of alcohol on behaviour, so is the food eaten responsible for how humans choose leaders. Opting for apex predators. They keep masses in check with laws and religions. Opium for the people.

But is man a predator? Or is that only a phase? What one does in one's own home is often beyond the long arm of the law, but do not try drunk driving, noisy gadgets, or unleashed pets in wrong places. That affects others.

And this is where a New World Order

comes in. Why outlaw and enslave more and more in times of democracy, why embrace autocracy of the few? Why go uphill, when one can go downstream?

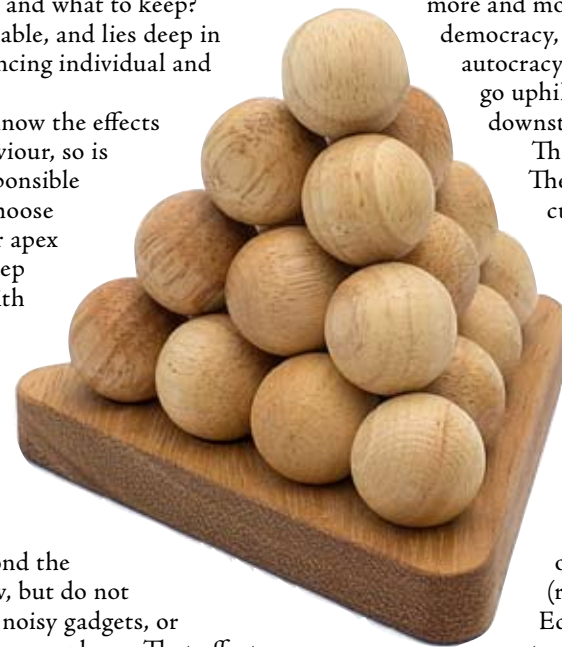
The answer is diet. There are herbivore cultures. The Global Village will be herbivore, or blows itself up.

Exoplanets should be out of reach to marauders. Plants have

protein, people do not have to kill (however humane) or 'domesticate' (read enslave).

Economy doesn't need to exploit nature.

The New World Order will become herbivore. Get ready!



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Stories of hope

by Donna Connolly

I know it has been a trying year (and in some cases, years) for a lot of people, so I thought I would focus this article on how we can create hope heading into the festive season, and some timely reminders.

Stories are how we make sense of the world! If we encounter something that doesn't seem logical, our cognitive mind fills in the blanks; it is how we are wired and it's part of our survival strategy.

However, we can sometimes get caught up in those stories. Rather than allow things to unfold, and the truth to reveal itself!

The repetitive stories can keep us in loops and create situations that don't serve our highest purpose, or allow us space to change the narrative

I encourage you to think about and ask yourself what are the stories that you are telling yourself and others. Both about you and your beloved pets.

Oftentimes, people who have "rescue" animals get so caught up in the unfortunate story of origin, they can keep their beloved animals in perpetual cycles of sadness, while the guardian or owner is nearly always the rescuer. The knight in shining armour.

I want to encourage people to move on from those stories, as animals themselves only live in the moment. It is true, they can carry behaviour and some of the muscle "feeling" memories from previous experiences. However, we have the ability and power to help create "new normals" and stories going forward.

I want to be clear that I'm not imploring anyone to "get over it" or not feel the feelings.

Just a gentle reminder that we are empowered or victims in the stories we tell to ourselves and about ourselves and our gorgeous animals. And the accompanying energy that those energies bring into our place and space.

Also, as we head into the silly season, I thought it very timely to check in with my



Dougie doing an epic Rainbow Zoomie into with his teddy

animal friends to offer some holiday reminders, to keep your fur babies safe and honour your sanity. Here's a list we compiled:

- You may have some extra time available, so consider going on some adventures, to the creek, ocean, bush walk or just snuggled up. They love it when you hang out with them. Time is the most precious gift.
- It's going to get hot, really hot. Make sure you exercise them in the coolest part of the day. Dawn and dusk are perfect. Also, please don't leave them in the car too long. It can be disastrous.
- Boundaries and limits. I know they look super cute in that outfit. But some just don't like it. (My Dora loves a good frock-up, however, her brother hated it. So I never tried it again on him. Animals are not here for our amusement.)
- It can be a wonderful magical time of year for some. And others' worst nightmare. Please have a contingency plan if your fur friends are afraid of crowds or fireworks. Anxious animals need preparation and some reassurance, allow time for this.
- Ahem... food. Some animals and people would like me to skip this point. However, it is important. Don't feed animals table scraps. Not only does it create undesirable behaviours, it just isn't good for them. Just a couple of examples: onions are poisonous to them. Cooked bones can splinter and

perforate their systems. Even though we love them very much and especially when they are working their "best ever puppy dog eyes", please be strong.

- Be aware. This is the time of year to be vigilant about checking our mates for ticks, even if they are using protection. And snakes, keep your property tidy and clean as possible. If you are surrounded by snake havens, expect to see them.

Last but not least

Please, don't buy animals as gifts. It is not a spur-of-the-moment decision. You have just locked that person into a potential 10+ year commitment. A financial and emotional investment that they may not be ready for.

Not to mention it can perpetuate the puppy mill industry.

The statistics surrounding animals that are dropping off to shelters after Xmas are staggering and heart-breaking.

Most of all I would love to send a heartfelt thanks to all the beautiful creatures and guardians I have had the privilege of meeting. It has been a huge year and the memories will remain forever in my heart.

Stay safe and enjoy one another. I look forward to connecting in the New Year.

We have gift vouchers available if you are looking for a unique and life-changing gift for yourself, family or fur-friends.

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Vic Florey, Michael Skinner and Dave Basten

Something for everyone at Nimbin Markets



Steph's coffee cart

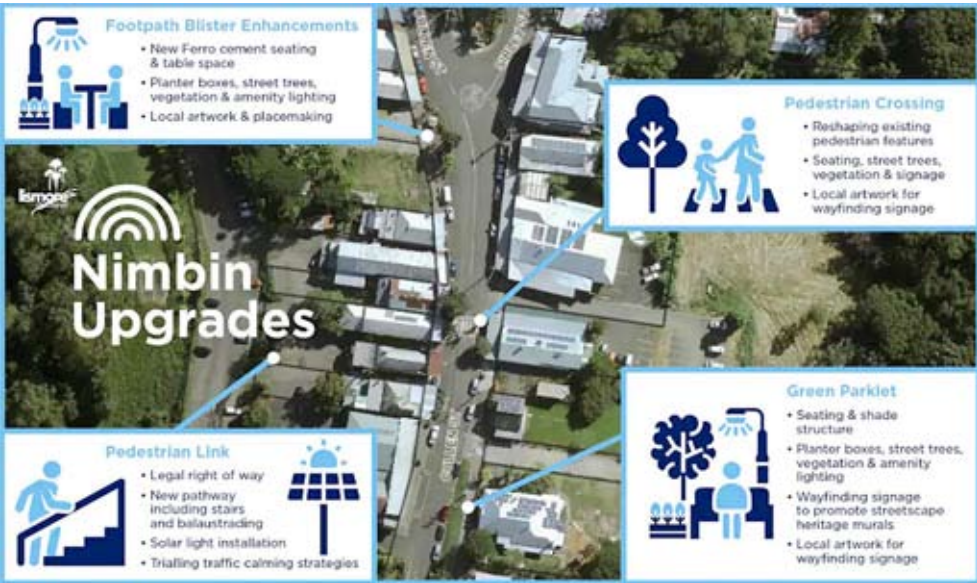


Tania and her red bus



Steve Hale
Photos: Sue Stock

Nimbin Wayfinding Project



In July, Lismore City Council received a \$500,000 grant from Transport for NSW to re-imagine and enhance the amenity of Nimbin's main business precinct.

As part of this plan, the Nimbin Community Centre is in the process of granting an easement to Council of the existing driveway and pedestrian pathway that runs beside the Birth and Beyond building.

The Centre is keen to invite feedback from

the community on this part of the proposed project.

For an overall look at the whole project, please follow the link below: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/nimbin-wayfinding-project>

You can navigate from there to the survey link, or go straight to the survey from:

https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/nimbin-wayfinding-project/survey_tools/nimbin-wayfinding-survey

Calendar givaways

The Nimbin GoodTimes has five Tarot Unearthed Calendars to give away to readers.

Tarot Unearthed 2023 is the Tarot Guild of Australia's first tarot-themed calendar. The calendars are A3 in size, retail for \$30 each and feature original images from 13 artists.

Tell us in 25 words or less about your favourite tarot card or maybe what you like about the Tarot Musings column (see page 26) for a chance to win one.

Send by 24th December to: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com with the subject name 'Calendar', and include a postal address.



Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

Black Sheep Farm visit

In November, 26 members of the Nimbin Garden Club traversed the entire length of Gungas Road to Jagad's rather unique property. Once there, we were treated to a garden visit and local history lesson in equal measure.

The property, now 30 acres in size and heavily timbered, was once part of a large dairy farm that boasted the same number of trees as the Nullarbor.

The previous owner put at least six buildings on the land, scattering them along the driveway, spaced for privacy, and one other, hidden amongst the trees and ominously called the Wolf Hut, built for his mother.

Between the main house, the guest house, and what was once the learning centre but is now the temple, there is a flourishing circular vegetable garden with concrete foundations, a metre deep to keep out the tunnelling bandicoots.

A little further down the drive is a pecan

tree that bears no fruit, for lack of a partner, and an English oak.

As we move back toward the main house we find a highly productive kiwifruit vine that hangs over a trellis, and several fruit trees.

Our host, Jagad (pictured) worked with computers before his epiphany. He decided he wanted a more simple, more meaningful life with less stress in a place where he could grow his own food, meditate and practise yoga.

It took him six months to find that place and now, after 18 months of living that life, he still has the same enthusiasm and passion.

Black Sheep Farm, so named because it has always attracted the black sheep, and once a place where Mac brewed his essential oils, is now a retreat where as many as 30 people can meditate or practise their yoga in an impressive building built by German journeymen.

Known as *wandergeselle*, these are people under 30, unmarried, childless and with no debts who have completed formal training in a trade. This tradition requires them to wear medieval clothing from the middle ages.



One of the journeymen is the son of one of the previous owners who returned from Germany after 20 years to build the temple/ learning centre first used to teach yoga, felting and other crafts.

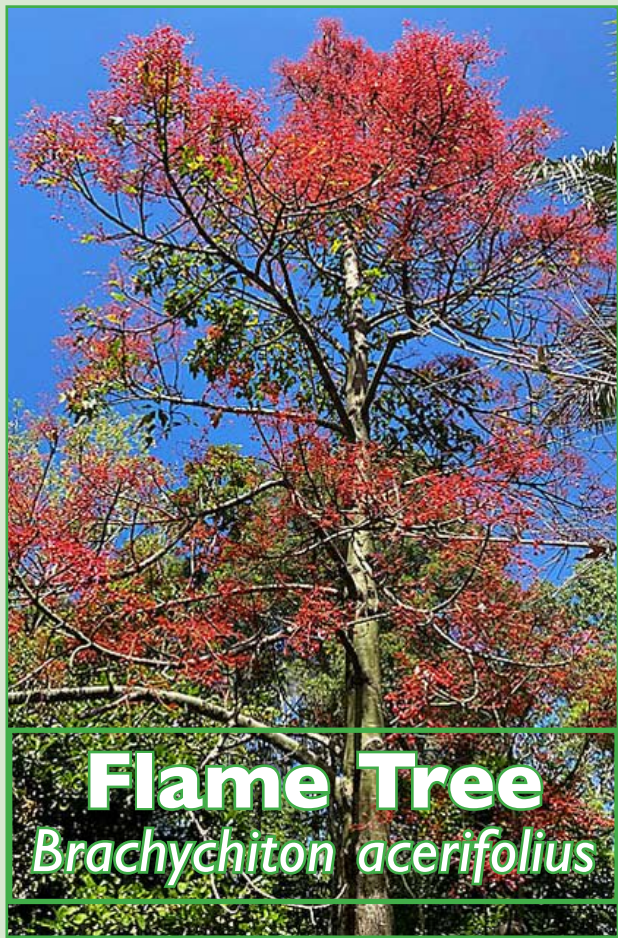
The building is double height with a mezzanine and a hardwood floor obtained from Kyogle school's basketball court.

This is a place where both the visitor and the environment are regenerated.

Jagea is hosting a New Years Eve event and invites people to go to the Compassion Temple facebook page for more information.



Plant of the month



Flame Tree
Brachychiton acerifolius

by Richard Burer

We can't miss this iconic species with an absolute show of Christmas and rainforest biodiversity mixed into one.

Often featuring in Plant of the Month over the years, this deciduous tree despite growing to around 30m is a must in the garden, landscaped into that special place or a feature tree in your conservation projects.

Personally, I've come to the conclusion that it's my most special tree at home and I've said in the past the combination of walking into the house through a path strewn with red flowers like a pre-monsoonal Indian wedding is one of life's visual pleasures.

A favourite of lorikeets, I love surprising the party and walking into their festivities which can last for several weeks.

In my conservation projects, this tree is a great mature phase tree to introduce early into your plantings as it's very hardy despite growing a little slowly depending on the position, soil and moisture.

This tree will always be available at your favourite native nursery and is easy to grow from the seed contained in the large rat-sized seed capsules.

Good health everyone and enjoy your summer and we will see you next year.

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant:
richard.burer@gmail.com

Nimbin bushwalkers take a break

by Peter Moyle

As the weather warms up, the Nimbin Bushwalkers wind down for a couple of months. It can be unpleasantly hot walking in December and January, so we take a break until February.

What a year it has been! The devastating floods and persistent rain have hampered our activities. The closure of many National Park camping and walking areas has made co-ordinating walks very difficult.

This is nothing to the loss and heartbreak felt by those affected by the floods, and our thoughts and best wishes go out to those recovering.

The weekends away camping with day walks again have proven popular with the stand-out trio being Binna Burra in the Lamington National Park, Girraween NP near Tenterfield, and Mulligans Hut out the back of Grafton in the Gibraltar Range NP. Great camp areas with a superb variety of walks to suit all fitness levels.

Next year we may return to some of these, or else we have some top spots locally to visit, hopefully National



The AGM had a great turnout

Parks can get the maintenance and repairs necessary to allow access to resume.

Next year is already looking bright for the club, the recent annual general meeting was well attended, and an enthusiastic group have committed for management positions.

Even though our annual dues are not until 1st January, 21 members have re-joined already and a schedule of walks is being assembled.

So, check out January's *Nimbin GoodTimes* or our Facebook page for the early walks in 2023.



President Pete

This Xmas, give gifts that live on

by Nerelle Draisma

With ever-mounting garbage problems, and the reality of climate change looming over our heads, it can sometimes be difficult to look forward to the festive season.

The time for gift giving is upon us once again. This year, why not consider making a meaningful gesture to the planet and cherished ones by giving gifts that live on?

Fruit trees, hanging baskets and that old native favourite your mate has been banging on about for years, could be just the remedy to soothe worried souls, ease mental illness and bring about



genuine good cheer for the years that lie ahead.

Come on down to Greenthumb Nursery at the Nimbin Building Materials, and if you still can't decide which plant for your loved one, why not consider a gift voucher?

If you are a super-organised soul and have gifts already



lined up, or you don't care much for Christmas, how about starting a New Year tradition in the form of planting a tree around the time it ticks over?

This is a great tradition I began with my children in what has become our annual way of giving to Mother Earth who so freely gives

to us.

With Australia's food bowl under water in 2022, it is a message to each and every one of us that in these changing times, living on the planet as a responsible human being is not about what you want out of life but what our obligations to the planet and future generations are.

Changing the consumption culture begins with each and every one of us; this year think about what it really means to give a gift.

Greenthumb Nursery is at Nimbin Building Materials, on Gungas Road, and is open until 4pm, Friday 23rd December.

Our scheduled re-opening is Monday 16th January.

Emotional regulation for horses

by Suzy Maloney

Looking to our own emotional state is essential to be able to create a space that is safe and positive for our horses. If horses feel threatened, they will look for ways to escape the thing that makes them feel unsafe, we certainly do not want that thing to be us.

If you watch any great horse trainer, you will notice how steady and calm they are, nothing fazes them, no matter what happens or what the horse does. Horses become calm and open to listening and learning in their presence.

The biggest gift we can give any horse is our own inner calm

If we are not feeling grounded and calm, we really should not approach them. Sometimes this means not riding or training that day, and that is OK. If we go ahead and interact with our horses when we are feeling emotional turmoil, there is rarely a good outcome.

These are the days when everything we do feels hard, the horse does not understand us, feels unwilling and often everything just goes backwards. It's best to accept that it's not healthy to work with your horse right now and come back later, or on another day.

The expression of our own frustration or anger when directed at a horse is not only going to result in a total loss of connection and relationship with our horses, but is



also morally wrong. Horses are never able to deal with our anger; it raises all their internal fears and sends their stress levels through the roof. It never results in the horse learning what we wanted them to do in the first place, it does the opposite.

If we are feeling angry and register that, we can then feel our anger as something belonging to us, not something we direct at the horse. And if we are feeling a strong emotion like anger, and are honest with ourselves, we are more likely to have the clarity of thinking to be able to decide if it is healthy to continue working with our horse or not.

Be aware of what we are feeling

At the same time as looking toward our level of calmness, we also need to be aware of what we are feeling and embodying that. This is being congruent. Horses know immediately if the person interacting with them is pretending to be one way, while inside,

they are feeling different. This sends mixed messages to the horse creating confusion and distrust.

If we are feeling sad, that is OK, if we are honest in how we are feeling not only will the horse remain calm, but they may even help us feel better. But if we are feeling sad and go to our horses all chirpy and pretending everything is great, they know, they always know, so it is best for them and for us to be real with how we are feeling.

Emotional intelligence is something that all horse people will benefit from working on. It is so easy to spurt our feelings outward onto others, both humans and horses. Going inward and bringing clarity to how we are feeling empowers us to then decide how we are going to respond to those feelings. Automatic responses to unrecognised inner emotions can result in inflicting pain on others around us, even when we do not intend to.

Horses need us to be their steady rock. Their primary need is to feel safe in the world. If we can provide that feeling of safety for them, they will work happily and willingly with us and be calm and steady in all they do, this is the goal of all horsemanship.

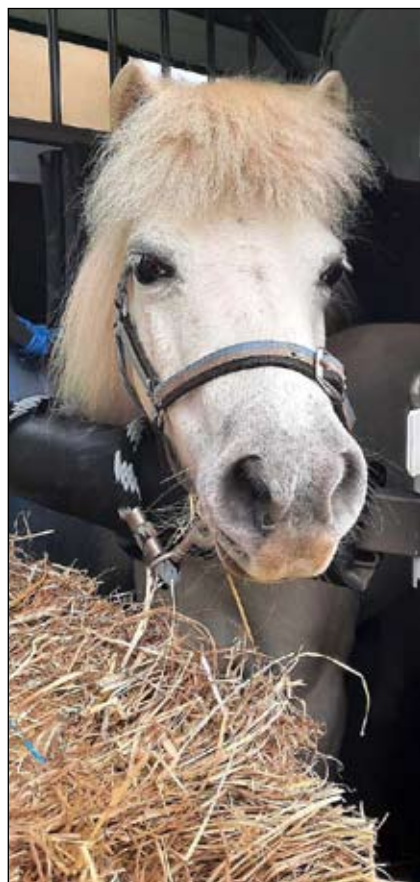
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Phone 0401-249-263



by Les Rees

With temperatures on the rise and unpredictable weather patterns, it is rapidly becoming stressful for equines.

During the last week we have been inundated with biting flies that cause constant irritation to our horses as they battle in an attempt to swat them off the vulnerable spots around their bodies. When I see our animals suffering, I also go into battle by providing them with sprays, creams, herbal medications and evening rugs to provide some relief.

Apart from the flies, our horses are often turned out on paddocks that were sown by dairy farmers for fattening

Season of stress

cattle, and these grass species can be unsuitable for equine digestion.

The problem for horses is that grass converts sunlight (together with water and carbon dioxide) into sugars in the form of non-structural carbohydrates (NSCs), which promote rapid growth particularly during spring and over the summer months due to high rainfall and humid conditions.

This is ideal for cattle but not for equines as they have very sensitive digestive systems that are unable to cope with the high levels of NSCs contained within the grasses, and if ingested for too long it can cause life-threatening issues.

When equines gorge themselves on the lush grass, enzymes in the digestive tract convert starch and sugars into simple sugars to enable the body to absorb them. This causes a surge in blood glucose, which initiates the release of insulin into the bloodstream enabling the uptake of glucose into the tissues. Problems occur when fluctuations of glucose lead to over-supply of insulin, which can be a contributor to subsequent insulin resistance.

Unfortunately, elevated glucose levels can trigger laminitis, painful conditions in the feet where the laminae surrounding the coffin bone become so weakened that they can no longer hold it in place. In advanced cases, the bone rotates downwards in the hoof capsule, causing extremely painful pressure within the hoof.

Grasses can also contain high levels of fructose molecules known as fructans, which are a non-structural carbohydrate and un-digestible. In order for the horse to absorb them, they have to be fermented by microbial

activity in the large intestine and in large quantities can cause a similar response to an overload of NSCs as it also initiates elevated insulin levels and is therefore another contributor to insulin resistance and possible laminitic activity.

Fructans are also not good for the bacteria in the gut as high levels kill the good bacteria and cause acidity levels to rise, and the subsequent release of harmful pathogens can also cause colic.

We have a miniature pony that has had on-going bouts of laminitis, and we have to be very careful with the amount of time she's allowed out to graze, the kind of grasses that are suitable for her, and other dietary requirements. As a result she spends time in a small yard during the high growth period with plenty of hay and water and is turned out in a small rough area for a few hours each day.

We recently had her feet radiographed and blood tests done to establish how she was going. The results were pretty good, as her coffin bone hadn't sunk into the hoof capsule as far as we had thought. This meant that Liam, our wonderful farrier was able to cut more off the length of her feet.

Long feet can have devastating effects on equine biomechanics and can cause painful compensations around the body, limiting the freedom of movement. This should provide a better quality of life for our special girl.

Sadly, many equines are left undiagnosed for far too long and cannot be saved, so it pays to access their feeding regime before it's too late.

*Les Rees is an equine naturopath and sports therapist. Phone 0437-586-705.
www.horsetailherbs.com.au*



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