

MardiGrass 2022 commemorative lift-out



So-called 'random' roadblock drug testing has to go

by Michael Balderstone, MardiGrass organiser

If you've forgotten MardiGrass is a protest, think about the people who got nabbed by the saliva police.

For the life of me, I cannot understand how the spit cops live with themselves. Do they have no conscience? They know full well whether drivers are not impaired when they do these tests.

They know the saliva tests looking for a tiny speck of THC is nothing to do with road safety. How do they live with themselves?

A 70-year old mate didn't smoke for three days and put up with back pain just so he could come, and still got busted.

A friend couldn't understand her positive reading then remembered the lip balm she'd used.

Meanwhile hundreds of locals didn't even get to their village's annual festival because the risk of losing your driving licence is not worth it.

Automatic loss of licence for three months is a massive punishment for country people. They lose their job. Which can lead to losing your home and family. No joke this for doing nothing wrong, nothing wrong at all.

So how do the cops live with themselves? I couldn't.

And disrespect for them just grows and grows

with this grossly unfair crude testing regime they are running. I see and feel it on the street every day. There's no respect for their driving tests, from us and them. It's a very sorry state of affairs.

My absolute gratitude to those who got past the police roadblocks and came to the protest. Some hitched, some organised lifts and others stopped using their medicine and suffered for it.

The police pretty much left people alone in the village; there were few arrests I heard of, but the spit cops are an embarrassment to themselves. Sorry for carrying on about it, but shame on them.

Bravo volunteers

MardiGrass couldn't happen without the volunteers and this year we missed the backpackers. However, many people put in huge efforts.

Luke, Brad, Aiden and Wolfy, Keys and his friends and Rayman worked seriously hard cleaning Plantem Park up, building the stage and fences and rigging up lights for days before the weekend.

Miss Guidance organised all the speakers and their beds and travel where needed. Caroline got the history displays together and made the flags with Graeme and Elspeth and much more.

Gaz painted banners, who knew he was an



old signwriter? Geoff, Neville and Dave and many more looking after the campers at the showground do a huge job.

Gail looked after the Hall and Louise the hall cafe all weekend. Steph organising the stalls, Charlotte the rubbish, Mitch the Skatepark fundraiser, Sally the doof, Jack running the Chai stall, French Sam in the Hemp Bar, Heidi managing Jungle Patrol, the Fire Brigade blocking the roads on Sunday, Neil making the program, Frankie and Katie on the gate, Juliska's fashion show, Frances's Music Awards, Keith and Bruce looking after the musos.

There were dozens more unpaid volunteers doing traffic control, rubbish, jungle patrol, invaluable drug-free drivers like Rainer and Donna, painters like Wil and Shelby.

And then of course all the speakers who came,

none of whom are paid. For sure I've forgotten many people, but you get the picture.

This is a big effort by a tiny village to try and show the importance of changing our attitude to drug use.

It's about understanding and compassion. The first leads to the second. Sincere thanks to you all, named or otherwise, because you made it possible and it was good.

Next year

Plans are already happening for May next year, which includes the 50th Anniversary of the Aquarius Festival May 10th to 22th, almost straight after MardiGrass, 5th to 7th May.

The hippies were right then and still are today. It's a dream of harmony between the people and the planet, and the drug war is a huge roadblock in the way.

The police know that better than anyone, and they need to stand up for what's right and become a respected part of our community again.

What they are doing on the roads, pretending to make them safer with testing people's saliva is a really bad joke. Simple, a bullying abuse of power, if you ask me.

If you were busted by the saliva police do contact the HEMP Embassy, we may be able to help you keep your licence.

A moment

by S Sorrensen

Some people reckon MardiGrass is stupid.

Well, I suppose in some ways it is: I officiate at the Hemp Olympix, where, this year, I witnessed a sports bong land a massive 40.7 metres from the throw line.

This throw triggered an eruption of euphoric applause from the spectators, and garnered the 2022 Hemp Olympix Bong Throw & Yell champion's trophy for an athlete from the Punjab team. What a moment. It was everything that's wonderful about humans. Grace, beauty, skill. I had a tear in...

Okay, yes, it's a bit weird.

But what is happening around me right now makes competitive bong throwing look like the sanest thing a person can do on a clear spring day.

The 76% humidity and a gentle tail wind – but within the wind-assist limit set down in the 'Rules and Etiquette of the Hemp Olympix' – make it a perfect day to



chuck a bong. My fingers twitch.

Yesterday's heavier humidity and a gusty south-wester made it tricky for competitors.

Despite the more experienced athletes negotiating the challenging conditions with the aplomb and skill that long experience brings, the scores still hovered well below the magic 40-metre mark.

That is, however, until a relative newcomer to the international Hemp Olympix circuit, the Punjabi Prince, strode confidently to the throw line and, with a classic

overarm action, threw an amazing 40.7 metres. Despite the conditions.

I'm smiling now just thinking about it.

I'm also sitting in my Superoo with another Hemp Olympix Official. My radio crackles with tales of floods in Pakistan, civilian deaths in Ukraine, tax cuts for the rich. I turn it off and turn up Gary Clark Jr playing 'Third Stone from the Sun'.

"What are you smiling about?" asks the other Hemp Olympix Official.

"The Punjabi Prince's chuck yesterday," I reply.

"Oh God, what a throw. Perfect technique," he says.

"And that yell..."

"Yeah," he says, "Was that a quote from Hamanjeet Singh's 'Rani Tatt'?"

"Yes. Genius," I say.

I'm in a line of stopped cars on the side of the road, about a kilometre from Nimbin. The engine is stopped, but still distorting the air with the heat generated from dodging potholes and echidnas. Everything is still and peaceful, except for the dozen police who flit about like flies, scraping the stopped drivers' tongues.

Apparently, the biggest problem facing Nimbin, the Northern Rivers, the country, the world even, is people having a joint sometime in the last day... or two... or week... or whatever (no-one knows) and then driving today.

Suck on that, climate change. Suck on that, people whose lives have been devastated by the recent floods. The most urgent job for these cops is cannabis ingestion.

Who pays these people to do this? Oh, we do...

"This'll take four or five minutes," the cop says, taking my tongue scrapers back to the police bus where a puddle of cops is testing for cannabis and lounging under a police bus awning, radios buzzing, guns touching. I reckon these drug tests are dodgy anyway.

A tradie, two cars ahead of me, is taken from his ute. He has tested positive for cannabis. Bad man. He must now leave his car on the side of the road, licence revoked until he's had his day in court. No work for him. Another life harassed. The flood and the cops – are they working together?

MardiGrass is not stupid. This is stupid.

Is there nothing useful this blue brigade of gun-toting tongue-scrapers could be doing? There are still flood marks on public buildings in Lismore that need scraping...

The cop returns.

"You're clear. Have a good day."

Ha! I knew those tests were faulty.

Bring out your best pot

by special correspondent, Igrow U. Buds

Picking a winner at this year's Cannabis Cup was easy; walking away afterwards was the difficult part. Despite adverse growing conditions that would have encouraged Noah to build an Ark, the buds on offer were choice. The Hash was rich with goodness and Hash entry #1 was the clear winner with 65 votes. Choosing the Best Bud wasn't an

easy task for some, especially when you're reduced to drooling and mumbling incoherently. The majority of this year's Judges were professionals and so cool, and being seasoned veterans of the highest order, they mentored some of the younger first timers so green outs were avoided and joints were properly rolled. Hats off to the first time winner of the Bud section whose entry #21 won the day with 42 votes. An awesome bud of outstanding

quality indeed. He wishes to remain anonymous despite being a well-known activist and much loved local lad. Next year's cup will again be held on the front lawn of the Nimbin police station during MardiGrass in the bright yellow tent. Entries for the Cup are already being sought by the local constabulary and other Ganja thieves alike, so keep them clear of prying eyes and remember to overgrow the government!



MardiGrass Colouring-In Competition results



Kids prizewinner, Evie Grant receives her prize and certificate at the Embassy. Beside her are proud mum Diana and dad Peter.



Chess championship a nail-biter

by Simon Rose

The 2022 World Stoned Chess Championship was a great success at this year's MardiGrass. Tucked away in a spot far from unwelcome eyes in a quiet part of the festival, the championship was held in a perfect-sized tent with heaps of chess boards set up. At its busiest we had eight games going at once, and 47 individual contestants played one or more games. Many countries were represented, and most pleasing was that there was a solid contingent of excellent young players. Nearing the end of the competition three 17-year olds: Kian a Nimbin local, Noah and Satria from Mullumbimby had played many games with wins in most of them. Kian was best placed having played 6 with 5 wins and a draw. It was time for the old "heads" to prevail and the organiser, currently on 6 wins no losses fronted up to play Kian for the championship.



A long hard-fought draw prompted both the exhausted players (hours of qualifying for the event) to play another game. Kian and I struggled to concentrate well but fought out a titanic struggle with happily a victory to the young local. I was about to award him the championship when in waltzed the canny Goddess who had come and gone but was on four victories

no losses, and certainly had not exhausted himself playing all day. So a final game was decided upon with victory to the cunning Goddess (Gerald). Unhappily I had to give the victory to the Goddess, but I felt the local youngster was the best player on the day. Thanks to all those who helped and participated. It was great fun and enjoyed by all who participated.

by Ian Wickham, on behalf of the judges

Here are the results of the Colouring-In Competition, judged at the end of MardiGrass. Artists coloured in certain posters available at the Hemp Embassy then dropped them off in the entry box for judging. The winners were...

- 1st: Shyanne Jade and Connor Lawson
- 1st (Kids): Evie Grant (7yo)

• Special Prizes: Mirani, Will and Shelby, also Shyanne and Connor who submitted a second entry. Winning posters are now displayed in one of the front windows of the Hemp Embassy for a week or two, so come along and have a look at them, and see if you agree with the judges.

