

NIMBIN ARTISTS GALLERY
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Nimbin artworks head to Gunnedah

by Karen Welsh

The 2024 Nimbin Art Fair once again showcased the very best of our local artists and produced record sales in a very difficult economic climate.

Opening night was well attended and set a good pace for sales. Huge thanks, for all the hard work, go to our artists and Gallery volunteers alike.

During the Art Fair, we were intrigued to receive an invitation to exhibit a selection of works at the Gunnedah Regional Gallery.

Their representative was so impressed with the wide genre base and high artist quality of many of our artists, we received a spontaneous expression of interest, and an official invitation soon followed.

Wow, we thought, and then set about how do we make this happen? It will be an extensive and expensive undertaking, a new and exciting project for both the Gallery and each of the selected local artists.

The Gallery then made application to the Margaret McLaren Art Foundation (MMAF) for financial backing.

The late Margaret McLaren, a long-term supporter of local art and artists, left a legacy that allowed the establishment

of the MMAF to continue her ethos of local support to local art and local artists. This project seemed to tick all the boxes.

Funding approval has just been received, so a partnership of the Nimbin Artists Gallery and the Margaret McLaren Art Foundation will provide the platform to take a selection of Nimbin artists to a wider audience in Gunnedah.

Meanwhile, the Gallery continues to provide a calm, artful place for us all.

Do you have a favourite local artist or need a thoughtful gift for a friend or a treat to yourself? Pop in and see what's new.

Find us at 49 Cullen Street, Nimbin daily from 10am to 4pm.



'The Gathering' by Peter Aland



'The Wolf Man' by Shannamay
 Right: 'The Blue House' by Christine Robinson

Twin Speak: A step into Cryptophasia

by Artis Tree

This month Serpentine Gallery presents a joint exhibition by Benjamin and Erica Gully.

This ground-breaking show has been years in the making, and something these twins have dreamed of bringing into fruition for the greater part of the last two decades.

An impromptu opportunity presented itself enabling these twin artists to take a step into realising their dream, a step into Cryptophasia (aka Twin Speak).

'Twin Speak' not only showcases the siblings' unique and individual art practices, but also features the first of many collaborations that highlights their more shared and common interests and loves within the field of visual arts and broader popular culture.

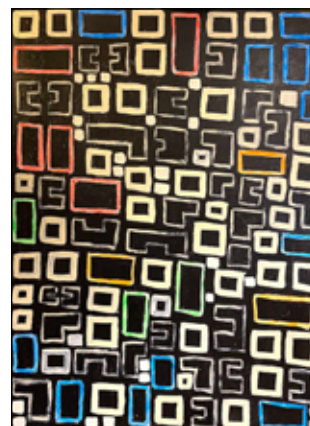
Drawing upon such instances as their favourite bands in high school, or referencing television shows they watched growing up, Erica and Ben utilise their art practices to provide us with a series of clues (some involving actual idiosyncratic language they developed when they were young and



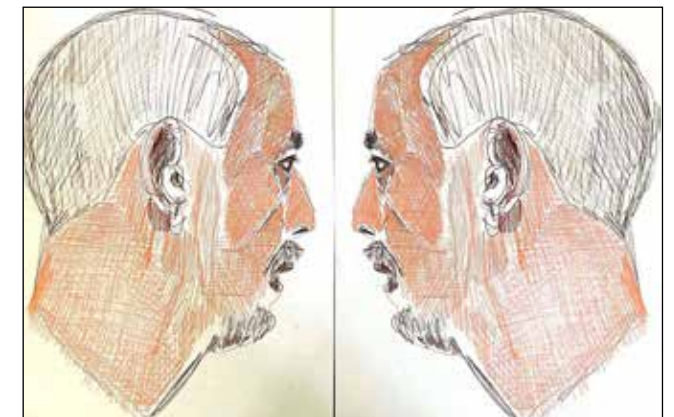
'Thou shalt not worship false Idles' by Erica Gully



'My Plegm' by Erica Gully



'Advice From Your Niece and Nephew' by Benjamin Gully



'Doppelgänger' by Benjamin Gully

still use today) that gives the audience insights into their world of Twin Speak.

Erica is an artist who utilises process that encompass illustration, printmaking, graphic design, and street art.

She has recently shifted

her practice from educator and facilitator and is reconnecting with her own art-making.

Benjamin is a multi-disciplinary artist obsessed with abstract landscape painting, sculptural ceramics and music production.

Lately his practice has

seen a return to digital art, printmaking, studio drawing and more portraiture/figurative based work.

'Twin Speak' opens 6-8pm Friday 21st June and is on exhibition until Saturday 29th June at the Serpentine Community Gallery, 104 Conway Street, Lismore.

Go west, to where the line stops



'Sombrero' by Jennifer Edwards



'Welcome to Nimbin' by Marty de Weerd



'Daytime Diva' by Jennifer Edwards

'The Wild West' by local artist Jennifer Edwards is the current exhibition in The Solo Space at Blue Knob Hall Gallery.

After a colourful opening event with cowboys and cowgirls getting into the spirit of the Wild West, it is clear that for Jennifer it embodies more than a collection theme – it represents a profound exploration of her own journey, emotions and expression of boundless freedom and individualism.

Through her work, Edwards encourages art enthusiasts to immerse themselves in her world and discover the rich tapestry of stories, memories, and inspiring experiences that have shaped her artistic vision.

'The Line Stops Where?' is the Members/Artists exhibition in the main gallery space.

The exhibiting artists have played with this theme that seemingly never ends... the lines that we see in nature, the 'lines' in architecture, a simple line of a road or track that disappears into the distance and leads us somewhere else.

Some lines are boundaries that are crossed unknowingly and lead a Bower Bird to collect a blue condom packet to entice a mate, as in Christine Wynyard's artwork 'Fertility Rites'.

These exhibitions are on show until Saturday 29th June.

Blue Knob Café

There is a new team running the Café. It now has gourmet toasties, soup specials, cakes and coffee/drinks. With more to come on the menu we look

forward to seeing you on the verandah and continuing to support this adventure that is Blue Knob Hall.

Blue Knob Writers Group

This group meet weekly at Blue Knob Cafe on Sundays. For more info contact Alex 02 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.

Blue Knob Choir

The choir meets on Thursdays from 3.45 to 5.15pm at Blue Knob Hall. Everyone is welcome, just turn up, or for more info call Peter 0458-487-865.

Check out the Blue Knob Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio Facebook page. Contact us at: bkhgallery@iinet.net.au or phone 02 6689-7449.

My Beautiful Scream



'By My Cister's Grace' by Sharla Lavars

Sharla La has been creating art to help navigate her inner and outer world for 34 years in a variety of mediums. In this exhibition she explores expression in the form of collage.

In Sharla's own words: "Making art. Creating medicine. Daily medicine. Vital for good health. A positive manifestation of my desire to express both realities, internal and external."

"Nourishing my life-force like the food I eat, making art is a daily, a nightly thing, that calls me to feel deeply and express confidently."

My practice speaks in a language the eyes can see, the fingers can touch, yet soundless, without words... there lies my power."

"The themes in my collage work are figurative and emotive, centred around self-portrait. Not the visual image of self, but the story of self, the many aspects to self, my life's journey and my relationship with society."

"They are personal as opposed to political, however, my intention is 'consciousness raising'; a term that



'Wrath' by Sharla Lavars

means bringing the personal into the political thus enabling others to relate and become part of the experience.

"I do not seek to shock. I seek to expose my own raw moments in times, my soul's nakedness, and in doing so, allow others a moment inside their own time."

"Collage is such an exciting medium; bringing images together, like a conductor brings the sounds of an orchestra into composition, I bring images from old books, old stories, to create a new narrative."

"Themes that remain generation after generation but become louder and prouder with every voice evolving with every decade that passes."

"Themes of love, connection, failure, disconnection. Hypocrisy, betrayal, empowerment and being one's authentically mutable ever-changing



'The C** up my Skirt' by Sharla Lavars

self. These are generic human themes."

"My artistic narrative is influenced by the solitary transcendent worlds of 'the spectrum' I walk through, interwoven with my environment and circumstances of my daily life; homelessness, nomadic life and line drawn between."

"I do not express the issues inside a homeless existence, but more so, the mental process of survival, adaption, and my emotional observation of the sociological perceptions from 'babylon' that I encounter daily. Each emotion its own entity. Each entity its own waltz."

"My work captures the many emotively infused paths dancing through the kaleidoscope that is my life; the eternal line I walk 'tween magick and madness."

Sharla La's exhibition, 'My Beautiful Scream' is on show from 7th to 28th June, Opening Night 7th June, 5-8pm, at Flourish Art Gallery, 15 Casino Street, South Lismore.

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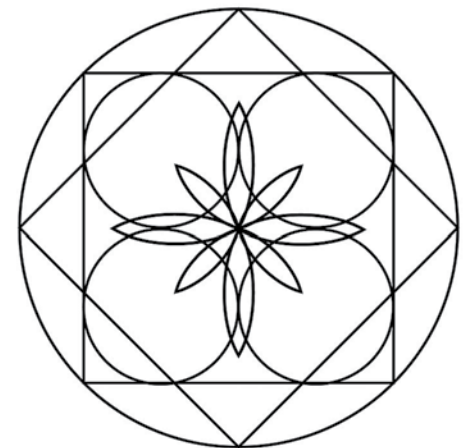
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The eyes of children are watching us



Photos: Sue Stock



by Luca Barbieri

Imagine a sunny day, a walk in the park, children playing carefree among the grass and trees. Every gesture, every laugh is a celebration of life. But behind those bright eyes lies a world of curiosity and observation.

Children watch us adults, learn from our behaviour, and form their understanding of the world through our actions. This is why it is crucial to be positive role models for them, especially when it comes to respecting and protecting the environment.

This is what Costa Georgiadis was explaining in Nimbin on Sunday 26th May at the Djanbung Gardens 30th anniversary commemoration, talking about the importance of protecting our environment.

The power of example

Children are like sponges: they absorb every piece of information, every gesture, every word.

If they see an adult picking up a piece of plastic from the ground and

throwing it in the trash, they learn that taking care of the environment is important.

If they see someone turning off the lights when leaving a room, they understand the value of saving energy.

Every small act of kindness towards the planet becomes a valuable lesson for them.

Creating a better future

Educating children about the importance of environmental protection means laying the foundation for a more sustainable future.

It means teaching them that every choice has an impact and that together, we can make a difference.

When a child sees an adult committed to recycling properly, using less plastic, or opting for eco-friendly transportation, they learn that these behaviours are not just isolated acts but part of a conscious lifestyle.

Practical activities to engage children

- Recycling: Involving children in recycling can

turn into an educational game. Explain to them why it's important to separate waste and how it helps the environment.

- Nature Outings: Organise walks in parks, nature reserves, or mountains. During these excursions, talk about the importance of preserving these places and the biodiversity they host.
- Family Garden: Create a small garden in the yard or on the balcony. Growing plants together teaches children patience, the value of work, and the importance of natural resources.

Communicating with emotions

Storytelling is a powerful way to convey values. Reading books together that talk about nature, endangered animals, or children saving the planet can inspire and motivate.

Stories touch the heartstrings and remain in memory much longer than simple instructions.

Being consistent and mindful

Consistency is key. Children

quickly notice discrepancies between what we say and what we do.

If we talk about the importance of reducing waste but are the first to use disposable products, the message is contradictory.

Being mindful of our daily actions and acting consistently with the values we want to impart is crucial.

A lifelong commitment

Being positive role models for our children is a lifelong commitment.

Every day offers new opportunities to show them how wonderful and fragile our planet is, and how important it is to take care of it.

Every small gesture counts, every word of encouragement can make a difference.

Let us always remember: the eyes of children are watching us. Let's become their source of inspiration, models of behaviour, and guardians of the world's beauty.

Together, we can raise a generation of aware and responsible citizens, ready to protect our environment and ensure a better future for all.

Mound Springs capping 'disaster'

by Maire Kashyap

At the lowest point of our ancient continent, in the vicinity of the endemic Mound Springs near Lake Eyre South in South Australia, lies the final resting place of the million-year old waters of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB).

These interconnected waters have migrated over eons of time from the Highlands of New Guinea and recharge areas in the north of the Continent, permeating through porous rock, fissures, clefts, faults and underground river systems, the details of which are known through the age-old wisdom of the Traditional Knowledge Keepers.

It is here in the arrogant ways of modern man, that the Roxby Downs uranium mine extracts up to 42 million litres of GAB water per day for its industrial complex and township situated 90ks to the south.

This lowest point of the GAB is also its southern extremity, being bound by large fault zones. It is at these margins where the confined waters are forced under pressure to the surface, via vertical leakage, through a vast network of Mound Springs, the life-blood of this part of the country.

Since 1983, Roxby's enormous extraction of water from this area has now severely impacted the Mound Springs, potentially to extinction. There is no measure to signify the loss to these endemic ecosystems and the consequent impacts to birds, animals and people.

Many efforts have been made during the last 40+ years to prevent the loss that is now being incurred in this Region but, as yet, to no avail.

Recent surveys, which have been carried out since 1985, show noticeable declines in both spring flow and subsequent surface water. There is great alarm for these Mound Springs located in the vicinity of Roxby's Borefield A, as well as those in a wider area with the once-permanent Hergott Spring at Marree (60ks to the East) being now completely dry. The original siting of the town of Marree was reputedly based on the presence and permanence of this water source.

Approximately 40kms to the West of Borefield A, the famous 'Bubbler' mound spring has also reportedly very much declined.

Reg Dodd, Arabunna elder and Traditional Owner of Arabunna country, has no doubt that the drying up of the Springs, including those at Hergott Springs and the Bubbler, are as a direct consequence of Roxby's Borefield activities.

It is important to remember that this area of Mound Springs was once nominated for World Heritage due to its unique and precious environmental and cultural values.

We are calling for an immediate cessation of water extraction from Borefield A, which is the immediate wellfield impacting the Mound Springs near Lake Eyre South, and seek further investigation by both State and Federal governments of the impacts resulting from the even greater extraction rates from Roxby's Borefield B to the north.

For any enquiries about the Mound Springs, please contact Maire Kashyap: mairkashyap@gmail.com

New study shows wombat burrows provide shelter for many species

by Mark Symons, WWF Australia

A new study, published in the *Journal of Mammalogy*, found wombat burrows boost native mammal richness, provide critical shelter for numerous species following severe wildfire, and may even be an important source of water.

It states "wombat burrows play a valuable and under-appreciated role in Australia's fire-prone forests".

Native species such as bush rats, agile antechinus, lace monitors, painted button-quails, and grey shrike-thrush were more prevalent around burrows compared to similar sites without burrows.

The research, supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia, focused on the burrows of common wombats (*Vombatus ursinus*) in Woomargama National Park and Woomargama State Forest in southern New South Wales.

More than 18,000 hectares of the national park and state forest burnt between 29 December 2019 and 18 February 2020.

Scientists set up sensor cameras in front of 28 wombat burrows situated amid varying degrees of fire severity and at 28 control



locations nearby with the same fire severity but without burrows.

Between June 2021 and April 2022, the cameras recorded more than 15,000 individual animals. Of the 56 species identified, 47 were native and nine introduced.

The cameras recorded 30 species inspecting a burrow, 11 foraging at a burrow, 10 entering or leaving a burrow, four drinking from a flooded burrow, and one bathing in a flooded burrow.

The painted button-quail and agile antechinus were two of the small species more active around wombat burrows.

Lead author Grant Linley, an ecologist and PhD Candidate with Charles Sturt University's Gulbali Institute, said "burrow sites had higher native mammal species richness".

"Wombats alter the soil,



Short-beaked echidna

topography and vegetation around their burrows. They turn over tonnes of soil constructing a burrow and their scats increase nitrogen levels which boosts herb cover.

"We think these changes increase the foraging opportunities for small insectivores and omnivores, such as bush rats, agile antechinus, grey shrike-thrush, and painted button-quails and that's why we see more activity by these species around burrows.

"More small vertebrates hanging around wombat burrows could then be drawing in larger native predators, such as lace monitors, so the impact of burrows may be cascading through the system," Mr Linley said.

Co-author, Professor Dale Nimmo from Charles Sturt University's Gulbali Institute,



Greater glider

said aside from better foraging opportunities, the use of burrows as a refuge from predators may also be attracting small animals.

"Many resources critical for species survival, such as logs, were destroyed by severe fires. We found associations between species and burrows were often strengthened in fire impacted habitat.

"For example, agile antechinus, bush rats, and painted button-quails – all smaller-sized animals – were most active at burrows subject to high severity fire.

"Wombat burrows are potentially aiding in the survival, persistence, and recovery of animal populations following severe wildfire events," Professor Nimmo said.

Co-author Dr Kita Ashman, a conservation scientist with WWF-Australia, said wombat burrows could help some species deal with

the challenges of climate change.

"Wombats extensive burrow systems can create microhabitats that enhance water retention, assist in nutrient cycling, and contribute to overall ecosystem resilience.

"In an increasingly unstable climate, wombats can be valuable agents in adapting to and mitigating some of the impacts of climate change," Dr Ashman said.

The study found smaller species were more active around burrows and larger species less active, with larger animals excluded from utilizing the available shelter and foraging potential due to the size of the burrow openings.

It also noted that 19 burrows filled with water at least once. A range of species drank this water, suggesting that in periods of low water availability, burrows could possibly provide a critical service.

"Common wombats are in decline, their range is contracting, and we need to turn that around. They're the only surviving native species capable of digging deep, wide burrows.

"Their value as providers of shelter and a refuge for numerous species is only going to increase as fires become more intense in the future," said Mr Linley.

The Green Wave

by Scott O’Keeffe, ecologist

At this time of the year, the autumn landscape in Northern Rivers is alive with highly animated flocks of small green and brown birds. They move quickly through dense canopy foliage, smaller trees and shrubs and close to the ground. They are so small and move so quickly it’s almost impossible to get a good look at them.

Patience is required. These mixed species flocks are made up of a variety of small birds that regularly migrate, disperse or become nomadic at this time of the year. They are often joined by local species that may be more sedentary. Brown Thornbills are easily seen in this district throughout the year, but in the autumn, they often join

mixed flocks of Honeyeaters and Silvereyes.

It said that these mixed flocks form in order to reduce the risk of predation for the individual birds that make up the flocks. Certainly, the idea of having many pairs of eyes watching for potential threats makes sense. These mixed flocks are mostly made up of social species of birds. They congregate around abundant food resource like flowering trees, and presumably the flocks remain cohesive because there is “safety in numbers”.

Most of the species that make up these mixed flocks have similar diets. Species like Brown-headed, Yellow-faced, Fuscous and Brown Honeyeaters consume both animal and plant food. Insects and other invertebrates, especially

spiders, honeydew, manna, nectar and pollen are all consumed. Some honeyeaters include small fruits in their diet. Brown Honeyeaters are an example.

Silvereyes, which are not honeyeaters, are sometimes the most abundant members of these flocks. Like many honeyeaters, they also feed on insects, but small fruits and seeds are a large part of their diet. The fruits of Lantana are favoured. Silvereyes are also fond of Velvet Leaf (*Callicarpa pedunculata*), a native shrub with bright lavender berries. These are very easy to grow. They mature and set fruit within a year or two. It’s worth planting a few just to attract Silvereyes.

It’s easy to find these mixed flocks at this time of the year, and some of these can be



20% of the population of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters (*Calygavis chrysops*) move north from southeast Australia in the autumn. The flocks often number in the hundreds.



Tiny Silvereyes (*Zosterops lateralis*) are often abundant in autumn flocks of small birds. Photos by the author

quite large, being composed of two, three or more species. This is not surprising, given that large proportions of the populations of some of these flocking species move north and from highland to coastal areas en masse at this time of the year.

For example, 20% of the Yellow-faced Honeyeaters from Victoria and southern New South Wales move north in the autumn.

Similar mass movements are undertaken by Brown-headed and White-naped Honeyeaters. Both species also appear regularly in mixed flocks of “little brown and green birds”.

These nice clear sunny days are perfect for birdwatching. Take a short walk on the edge of a thicket in the early morning. The late afternoon, about an hour before dusk,

is also a good time for observing these birds.

The edges of remnant patches of bush land, even those dominated by exotic species, eucalyptus forests (even small patches), vegetation of all sorts on creek lines and the edges of rainforest are good places to look.

At this time of the year, your patience will be rewarded.

Friends of the Koala bemoan lack of government funding

Silva Evereas, General Manager of Friends of the Koala, tirelessly advocates for securing state and federal backing to obtain the vital funding and resources required to prevent koalas from becoming extinct.

After the Federal budget was handed down, she said, “We are very disappointed that our national icon continues to be neglected by the Federal Government.

“This year alone, we have seen a 20% increase in koalas requiring treatment in our hospital. We, and organisations like ours, urgently need financial support to keep up with demand and ensure koalas are around for future generations.

“The continued operation of our Koala Hospital is at risk



Gidja and Boorie

without financial support. Koalas are loved and supported globally — our leaders must recognise their significance and support the organisations that work tirelessly to protect them.

“Koala populations and



Jackie and Frankie

mitigation of the threats they face must be supported by expert koala hospitals and rehabilitation facilities capable of assessing, treating, collecting samples, reporting, managing and monitoring koalas in these areas.

Without financial support, none of this can be practically achieved.

“The failure of the Australian Government to allocate sufficient funding for koala conservation and the protection of their habitat undermines the efforts of hundreds of volunteers across the country who work tirelessly 24/7 to protect this vulnerable species.

“This budget’s lack of sufficient funding for koala conservation is a missed opportunity to show action in biodiversity protection. We need to re-think our priorities to safeguard our wildlife and their habitat.”

Friends of the Koala’s mission is to make a significant contribution to Australia’s biodiversity by ensuring the conservation of the iconic koala and the preservation

and enhancement of its habitat, particularly in the Northern Rivers region.

The organisation plays a crucial role in protecting and rehabilitating koala populations through its dedicated efforts, including habitat creation, rescue and rehabilitation initiatives, and the establishment of a specialised koala hospital.

Friends of the Koala was established in 1986 to create habitat for koalas and then increased its focus to rescuing and rehabilitating koalas obtaining its license from NPWS in 1993.

The first care centre was opened in 2018, becoming a specialist koala hospital in 2020. The organisation has recently re-branded the hospital as Northern Rivers Koala Hospital.

Drivers urged to look out for koalas

Friends of the Koala has made a plea for motorists and holidaymakers to take care of our iconic koalas.

The call comes after a record number of koalas were killed or severely injured due to vehicle strikes in the region between May 2023 and May 2024.

During this time, Friends of the Koala received reports of 71 koalas who were hit by vehicles, of which only 13 were able to be rehabilitated and released back to the wild.

Unfortunately, 80% of koalas hit by vehicles last year did not survive the impact.

Silva Evereas, General Manager at Friends of the Koala, said with the current koala breeding season, drivers must be vigilant to ensure these numbers don’t continue to rise.

“Koala breeding season is so important to the health and well-being of koalas as it also

makes them more active and likely to encounter motorists on roads as they search for their mate,” she said.

“We’re asking that all residents, motorists, and visitors to the Northern Rivers region be mindful that koala habitat is all around them. It’s important to keep their well-being in mind as you travel through the area to minimise the risk of accidents.”

Friends of the Koala offers the following recommendations for motorists:

1. Reduce speed: koalas are often difficult to spot from a distance, especially at night, and can cross the road unexpectedly. Lowering your speed will give you more time to react and avoid collisions.
2. Be cautious: pay extra attention when driving through areas identified as wildlife habitats, or where signage indicates recent sightings.

3. Report every koala you see close to, or on a road immediately, whether they appear healthy, injured or dead.
4. If a koala is on or near the road and may have been hit by a car, stay with the animal until a rescuer attends. If you cannot stay, try to be as exact as possible about the location i.e specific addresses, GPS points or landmarks are incredibly helpful.
5. Save the phone numbers of Northern Rivers wildlife rescue organisations in your phone, so you are ready to report any sightings or accidents. For koalas across the Northern Rivers, call Friends of the Koala’s 24/7 koala rescue hotline 02 6622-1233.
6. Download IFAW’s Wildlife Rescue App to be connected to the closest licensed wildlife rescue group across Australia at the touch of a button.



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Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Peter Brooker

Robert Zimmerman (Bob Dylan) once sang, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind is blowing", advice many Nimbin Garden Club members took the day we visited Pam Craven's property by stepping outside, raising one damp digit into the air and deciding the promised forecast of overcast skies and occasional showers might be wrong.

So, kitted out in gumboots and sun hats, we gathered at the pavilion re-creating a scene reminiscent of the party in the Great Gatsby as we listened to Pam and her son Ken tell us about the regeneration project they have undertaken while the dam, which looked more like a lake, reflected the surrounding bush like a Monet painting.

Pam began by telling us she had escaped Melbourne for the Dandenong Ranges where she stayed for 12 years, before escaping again to the warmer

climate of Nimbin. She was almost prepared for this final escape as the Dandenong Ranges apparently have similar rainfall and soil to Nimbin, but this time permaculture entered the equation.

After her ex husband Michael completed the course, they planted native trees around the border of the 20-acre parcel of land, then set about building swales so that water would meander through the property rather than simply pour into the valley.

They used the typical permaculture structure of curved stands of trees to deflect, rather than block wind, trees that cast shadows, like clouds, over the ground allowing nature to scatter her bounty to grow where it could or perish where it couldn't.

In short, it is an approach to land management that adopts arrangements observed in nature. It's not new, Juvenal the Roman satirist (c.55-127AD) wrote, "Never does

nature say one thing and wisdom another."

The project is at the end of its third year and as you wander around the dam, where prehistoric moss grows in clumps, and peer into the gully, you can see the lack of Lantana and the skeletal remains of dead Camphors left to break apart in storms or collapse slowly over time.

These trees originate in Asia and were introduced into Australia in 1822 as decorative plants. They can live for 400 years, are very invasive and have an impressive 70% seed viability rate.

Their oils can be used as insect repellents, are used in Vicks Vapor Rub, perfumes and, oddly, embalming fluid among many others, including as a cooking oil in India, but don't try this at home before seeking professional advice as there are two types of Camphor and only one is edible.

The Camphor is unwanted, and as soon as it is removed



Macaranga, Bleeding Heart and Pencil Cedar appear. The Cedar grows quickly, has a broad, sheltering crown that protects the understory, but is short lived, about 20 years.

There is an edible bamboo forest nearer the house which, at maturity, could be used for construction, somewhere a fig tree grows, there are mandarins and newly-planted bananas, a Tipuana Tipu festooned with Stag Horns; a Neem tree, Macadamia, Cinnamon Myrtle as well as others.

From the veranda, where a flowering cactus grows in a pot, there are extensive views east across the valley. There was so much more to this property, but space has beaten us once again.

Next meeting is at



Photos: Sue Stock



Christine Howard's, 104 Gungas Road on Saturday 15th June at 2pm. Car pooling is advised. Don't forget to bring a chair, a cup and something to share.



Yanglash



View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

How do men identify themselves in today's society? This is a question that needs an appropriate cultural response and the sooner the better.

The generational transition towards a more feminised yin culture (where women's roles have expanded rapidly) has taken men by surprise and while some have adapted, some have not. The current spate of violence against women is testimony to this.

In fact, there is a concerted effort being made by some boys like misogynist Andrew Hate to wage a yanglash, targeting disenfranchised youth that struggle with their masculine identity.

As a father to two men, I ensured that both my boys were initiated into manhood when they were 13. This left no doubt in their minds that they were now expected to behave as young men, and this behavior was enriched by a process guided by ancient wisdom.

Many cultures went even further, removing foreskins at an age when sexual refrain is almost impossible for boys. Afterwards, any erection would have been quite painful so the lesson had consequences in thought control.

As a Tantrika, I have seen the benefits of control of my own sexual energy and found this can extend through to control over all my emotions.

In this regard, it is women that initiate men. The discipline to rise above all base chakra urges (including violence) is not taught to boys. Now they get abundant and free porn.

The yin transition I spoke of earlier can only be the response the planet needs to overcome the existential threats posed by climate change and war.

Capitalism and Christianity have held hands since the Council of Nicaea to forge such a destructive pact that we have forgotten how to live in harmony with the planet.

I would contest that if we are to survive as a species, we need to swing to yin sooner rather than later.

This does not mean men need to become more feminine. Masculinity, in its higher form, is beautiful. It is only when it reacts immaturely to danger or threats that it can be unpredictable.

That perceived danger (from rising feminism) may be contributing to domestic violence. How do we quell this idea? Men's



behaviour change programs and e-support for offenders would help a lot.

I have been lobbying state and federal governments for the last seven years to change the court response to domestic violence.

I have designed a communication tool called MoDiCom (moderated digital communication) that could be mandated for use post DV orders.

It would give survivors and perpetrators a safe way to communicate via an app with communication training, moderated language controls, red flagging inappropriate messaging and other functions that de-escalate potential violence.

This project has the support of many grassroots organisations, an ex-magistrate and community legal centres. It has not gained traction at the highest levels, despite all our local politicians (Sue Higginson and Janelle Saffin) having copies of the design documents and expressing their support.

If you feel as strongly as I do about this, then please reach out to them and ask them to support the MoDiCom project in parliament.

Stuart McConville runs Pooh Solutions Compost Toilet and Waste Water Services
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Bushwalkers tackle Warrie Circuit



by Peter Moyle, Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

And then it rained, again. We know how to get the weather in the Northern Rivers: drought, flood, fire and rain. It all is covered, but unfortunately it takes its toll on our bushwalking.

More track and park closures has us scheduling and then re-scheduling, but we still manage to get out and about in the great outdoors our backyard offers.

The highlight of the last month was the drive over the border to Springbrook National Park and the fabulous Warrie Circuit walk.

It was a challenging 14km walk from up on the escarpment to the valley floor and

the crystal-clear creeks before the climb out.

Light rain welcomed us, but it soon cleared, and this must be one the most prolific waterfall walks we have access to.

After the recent rains they were in full flow and the cascading water made for different wow moments as we came across each one going down and then just as many on the climb out. A favourite, and one we will definitely return for.

Walks programme

21st to 23rd June Lake Arragan in Yuraygir NP near Broomes Head

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498.

You must register with Ron, as numbers are limited.

Grade: 3-4. We will be walking parts of the multi-day coastal walk, especially the section from Angourie to Lake Arragan. We may also do some paddling if enough interest.

Meet: At the campground, contact Peter to register your interest. You can come for a day walk or you can camp for a night or two. Sites 25, 26 and 27 have been booked to share, contact Peter if you need a site. or book your own nearby. NSW Parks vehicle daily access fee applies, or yearly is better value. Walks: There will be a walk on the Saturday from 9am and the Sunday from 8am. Camping: Peter Moyle is taking bookings, so ring to reserve your stay.

Sunday 7th July Goonengerry National Park

Leader: Ron Smith 0497-792-789 You must register with Ron, as numbers are limited.

Grade: 3-4. 10km approximately 4 hours. There are some off-track sections that may be slippery. Good walking shoes/boots needed. We will be walking into an area with some nice waterfalls, Ron guarantees plenty of water. This is a great walk even in the wet, as it is on top of the ridge so not boggy.

Meet: 9am at the Goonengerry NP at the end of Mill Road. Bring the usual hat, water, and lunch.

Loving assertiveness

by Suzy Maloney

I've created this term to help highlight a situation I sometimes see in my work with clients. The two words seem to conflict with each other, but they can be very compatible.

I'll give an example of when loving assertiveness is not happening. I've seen well-meaning riders sitting on their horses banging away with their legs and getting little to no response. They just keep doing the same thing.

I can tell by looking at them that in their minds they doubt the horse will listen to them. And they're right. There are a few things going on here, and I'll try and shed some light on it.

If we apply an aid to a horse and get no response, then keep doing the same thing over and over, we're desensitising the horse to that aid. This is exactly the process we use to desensitise horses. In this case we'll be desensitising them to the leg aid.

Plus this is not very pleasant for the horse. It's a form of harassment and can make horses sour mentally. They may end up disliking riding because it's all a bit



unpleasant.

It's also ineffective and can result in the horse doing less and less until there's almost nothing happening. Everything becomes a huge effort for the rider and the pleasure in riding can be diminished.

So, what can we do instead? We need to be willing to escalate our aid if we don't get a response. This can be an increase in the aid or an add on such as an extra squeeze or voice aid. Then the moment the horse responds with even the smallest try, we release all pressure.

That's the physical part, but perhaps the most important part is in our heads. I sometimes feel 50% of horse riding is in the body and 50% in the mind. If there's a voice in our head

saying "She won't go" then she won't.

Sometimes I wonder if horses are mind readers, but I think it's just that they can feel intention. If we are absolutely sure the horse will move forward in our minds, they will.

Once we have this clarity of mind, our aids can be reduced, the horse feels what our intention is.

Sometimes riders are not accustomed to asking for something and getting a response. They may have a naturally submissive personality. For them asking a horse in this way can be difficult. That's where loving assertiveness comes in.

This is quite different to aggression; assertiveness is simply stating what you want with clarity. Aggression happens when

we insert negative emotional content into what we're doing. Assertiveness is a life skill, and for some it's a difficult one to master.

Being lovingly assertive means asking with love in your heart. There is clarity of mind completely without aggression, just pure assertiveness. When intention and emotional state come from a place of love, it feels entirely different to the horse, even if we're doing exactly the same thing.

Being natural herd animals who live within herd structure, horses love having a human who can make clear decisions and communicate with clarity.

This type of human is someone they can feel safe around, they don't need to worry about the lions and tigers anymore, the assertive one does that.

This can be a great gift of peace for your horse, enabling them to relax and just get on with life without having to make all the decisions and look out for danger.

Being loving and being assertive – both can be happening at the same time.

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Energy and defence mechanisms

by Les Rees

I saw an article recently stating that dogs can recognise bad energy. Apparently it's been proved scientifically!

Personally, I think that a huge number of people could have told them that already, and it makes sense that all living things must have some awareness in order to remain safe and sound.

Plants are able to defend themselves by using secondary toxic compounds, many of which taste bitter. These plants can only be eaten in small quantities by most animals for good reason.

Alkaloids produced in approximately 20% of flowering plants also taste bitter and contain compounds that have strong physiological effects on animals even if eaten in low quantities. Hemlock is an example and is known for being used by European witches. It contains eight alkaloids that can be extremely dangerous for most animals.

It's well known that horses can determine your energy from 20 metres away, and they're ready to react to you by the time you reach their side. Bad energy often exacerbates their behaviour towards you, as their defence mechanism has been readied for their own protection.

Dogs can be very aggressive when they become aware of bad energy and go into protection mode. I have witnessed with this with my own dogs on a couple of occasions, once when I was approached by a man who was pretty drunk and abusive towards me as I passed him on the street.

I was surprised that my normally cuddly, sweet-natured boy raised his hackles and growled at the man, stopping him in his tracks.



I find it interesting that being around animals makes me very aware of my own reading of external energy, because I am watching the discourse going on between them constantly.

I particularly love to see this with our horses and the dogs during cross species communication between them. They definitely have an understanding of one another.

The conceived ideas we get from looking at a painting can promote quite severe reactions and emotions depending on the way they are interpreted by those viewing them.

It may have something to do with the way in which they were created, as some artists create by addressing their internal world, which can sometimes be quite dark and disturbing, while others depict their interpretation of

their external environment, expressing emotions of appreciation.

Some people were quite offended when Salvador Dali depicted his dreamlike paintings in the era of surrealism, whilst others are offended by the famous poo-making machine and the row of vaginas decorating the halls of the MONA Museum in Tasmania.

The point is that we all read energy in order to exist in the world we live in. It provides us with protection from the things that we fear, and also nurtures us with the things we identify with.

I'm pretty sure that the energy of the area we live in up here is extremely nurturing to many of us who are lucky enough to live here.

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