

Pedestrians

Don't get me started
by Harry Gumboot

I'm sitting on the bench outside the Environment Centre waiting for the traffic to clear.

Cars are backed up well past the Newsagent in one direction, and beyond a couple of school buses, double-parked outside what used to be Soward's garage, in the other.

What's holding things up? The constant trickle of locals who amble onto and over the pedestrian crossing in ones and twos, seemingly with no situational awareness of those around them, whether on foot or wheels.

The NSW Traffic Act requires drivers to give way to anyone on, or about to step onto a crossing; a situation that currently applies around 75% of the time in Cullen Street.

Are the small blisters outside the Environment Centre and the Aquarius Café part of the crossing? Does loitering on them while having a chinwag with a mate constitute an intention to cross? Are drivers legally bound to stop until indicated otherwise?

I doubt pedestrians are aware of this because, if they were they might make a conscious effort to regulate their movements.

But there's more. Having brought the traffic to a halt, some pedestrians

choose to leave the crossing and head off on a tangent when only halfway across.

The NSW Traffic Act defines jaywalking as walking on or across a road when within 20 metres of a pedestrian crossing.

In Cullen Street, that 20 metres covers roughly the area from the northern wall of Daizy's to Armonica on one side, and the Hall entrance to the Post Office on the other. Outside this area it is technically legal to cross, but it's fair to assume – if only for one's personal safety – that cars have right of way.

This may come as a surprise to some who believe their bodies are sacrosanct, even in the face of a monster SUV driven by a confused tourist.

Do we need a set of crossing lights, a lollipop person, or a situational awareness workshop? The lollipop is certainly needed at events like MardiGrass.

Meanwhile, across the road and just up from the laundry, a couple of locals – who I watched cross individually a few moments ago – have joined forces to abuse a woman driver for blocking their footpath while she waits for an opportunity to turn into Cullen Street.

That's not happening until the traffic clears, and the traffic's not clearing until every entitled pedestrian has completed their individual Nimbin journey.



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A celebration of all things Soul

It took me a while to grasp the concept of *soul*. Heart, gut and brain associated sayings are so much easier to imagine.

There is heart ache, take heart, to your heart's content, something can be gut wrenching, it takes guts to do that, or, there is the brainwave and wrack your brain – these relate to organs housed in the body with, admittedly, a life of their own, but where on earth is the soul located?

Soul may represent the embodied energy field, yet I wonder, isn't there more to it? Some define the energy field as having precedence over matter, forming, deconstructing and renewing our material existence.

However, soul seems to carry a notion of the divine that falls under the radar of reason.

The concept of soul, why does it escape me like a dancing butterfly, a vanishing rainbow or the drift of a scent? Lovely fleeting moments imbued with soul.

Sometimes soul is simply lost and you go on a soul search. You look for it in places like deep forests, mysterious caves, still lakes and a starry southern sky at night illuminating the places that indeed have soul, yet, where is mine?

Will a starving soul feed on those soulful features of Mother Earth? Nature always seems to correct my distorted views and muddled feelings and gives me back the belief in my motives that ought to align with conscious and rightful action that in turn cushion the seat of my soul.

Lately, there is a lot of distortion of motives – with the collective experience of very disturbing events too close for comfort – and you may question other people's motives and the correctness of their actions.

I feel that considered action based on balanced viewpoints is now of utmost importance, and not acting mechanically because the majority says so, but from the depth of our soul can be a life saver. Confusion can make you act out of character or even judge harshly, while brain fog can make you feel numb.

Surround yourself with soulful things, anything that emanates beauty and dignity, and warms your heart. Avoid places that drain your soul – like shopping centres and the like – and connect with something or someone that makes you feel alive.

I am a fan of animated objects. Soft toys in our house are almost sentient beings and each one of them has a distinct character – for soulless beings are featureless.



by Antionette Ensbey

Your soul is a mark of your uniqueness, which perhaps is the defining feature because you are not a functioning item like a washing machine, but a wholesome entity that breathes life.

Maybe it is not obvious that uniqueness, as opposed to sameness, truly connects. Individual patterns weave the fabric of planetary life of which we are a part.

Nature thrives on subtle differences that keep the wheels turning – no two cockatoos are the same – and not being swept away with the maelstrom of current events keeps your boat afloat.

Therefore, it helps to stand back from the noise of the world in order to recapitulate, watch the chaos from a safe distance, and get your bearings to sort the corrupt from the principled.

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A moment

by S Sorrensen

It's sunny, sometimes, with rain, sometimes. It's the sort of weather that makes it impossible to settle on a speed for my windscreen wipers.

I changed wiper speed from regular continuous to medium-high intermittent as the downpour petered out, and now the wipers are squeaking against the dry glass. I hate that sound. I turn them off.

The narrow road snakes through scruffy forest to cross the range that separates my shack under the cliffs from the nearest town. It's a pleasant drive into the new year, which I want to be better than the last.

Last year, the whole world cried in pain; even our own golden beach bled by year's end.

Bunkering down in my shack during the Xmas retail bombardment, suffering only minor injury from stray internet shrapnel, it feels good to have all that in the rearview now and the town ahead, where I'll replenish my cupboards and, perhaps, talk to a person.

It's raining again. Just a bit. I turn the wipers to slow-medium intermittent.

Dare I wish for a better year? I squint to see what lies ahead. The future is hazy, like the mist rising from the road, nebulous silver wraiths swaying and shape shifting. I see monsters, machines and murder. I also glimpse a phantom, lit by the sun, beautiful, slow-dancing and smiling.

The windscreen splatters with large drops shaken from roadside trees by a rogue wind. I turn into a corner. The wiper wipes and the windscreen clears. I can see clearly now: a carpet snake is stretched across my side of the road.

Not only that; a truck laden with



large plastic water tanks approaches from the opposite direction. Time slows down. My heart makes a beat.

The python is not moving; reluctant, I reckon, to leave the warm bitumen. It seems unperturbed by a 2006 Subaru Forester barreling towards it. But maybe it is. How can you tell if a snake is worried? I mean, it's not going sprint for cover or shake its fists or even furrow its brow.

It's pissing down now. I flick wiper speed to fast continuous. I brake.

That's instinctual, but there's no way I can stop before hitting the snake.

The past year has shown me that brutality must be part of who we are. But even though we humans apparently care little for any species, including our own, or even for the biosphere we share, I don't want to kill this serpent. Clearly, I'm not human.

I bear the snake no grudges; I reckon humans would have trashed Eden even without Apple. It's God who's the problem, not fruit or knowledge.

The other option is I could veer into

the truck, saving the snake, but causing myself and the truck driver (especially myself) harm, not to mention the clients' distress at the late delivery of their water tanks.

Of course, I won't do that. Obviously, the truck driver knows that too; he looks unperturbed. (But maybe he is. How can you tell if a truck driver is worried?)

No-one seems worried: parents taking empty bottles to the tip; kids on their new e-bikes. Is it just me? Should I just turn up the music? Buy something?

I have to run over the snake. But I don't want to be a killer; I want to slow-dance in the sun. I will run over the snake.

I run over the snake. It snaps – what? – a bit knocking up against the driver's door. It's not a snake. It's a lichen-encrusted tree branch felled by the rogue winds.

My heart makes another beat. The wipers squeak. Sounds good. I don't grieve for the stick.

More S writing at: ssorrensen.substack.com

A useful f*ck-up

It's been an interesting month in the office. After settling some matters, getting Final Orders in an Undefended Hearing yesterday, I click on the Courts Portal to see how many legally aided parenting files we still have, but it's down for repairs.

At the end of November, I threw a tantrum. It's in the December edition. The Private Lawyers Practice Quality Unit took me at my word and decided to transfer the half dozen files I'd mentioned. The clients in question received a letter from Legal Aid Grants and freaked out. They don't want to lose us.

But that's family law. It's safer to write about crime. A client I've been representing for years is back inside after an argument with his sister. He hadn't been out long.

Their mother had just died and they were stressed, making sure they could keep the house, paying the bills that had mounted too high, not to mention sorry business, and his sister, with three kids, wasn't helping him. He relapsed. They had

an argument.

She couldn't handle him when he was on ice and called the cops. Common assault (allegation that he punched her on the arm) and breach ADVO (intimidation). We apply for legal aid for a bail application. In court I stuff up and he stays in.

There's a witness, a bloke from the other side of the road who heard the shouting but didn't see any punching. His sister, the Victim and Person in Need of Protection, has been subpoenaed.

I assume she's there and suggest to the officer in charge that we plead to the breach ADVO if they drop the common assault. After a brief word with the prosecutor, she agrees.

I have my written submissions on sentencing ready to go. A copy for her and one for the Magistrate, which was easy, just a matter of updating the ones from before, adding references and an out-of-date MERIT (Magistrate's Early Referral Into Treatment) Report.

The breach ADVO was at the very low end of objective seriousness.



Legal writes
by John 'Sindhu' Adams

She's not there. If we hadn't pleaded, it would've been dismissed.

Anyway, rather than let him out on time served, a Sentence Assessment Report is ordered, and he's in for Christmas. His lengthy criminal history fits with his family history. His mother, a member of the stolen generation, was a good friend of mine.

She could be a difficult person, which was useful in the work she did for the community. Once she invited me to a meeting of Grandma's Against Removal.

I've presided and sat on a lot of committees but have never seen one so well run. These women understand respect.

Anyway, her son, dealing with being gay and black with an ice problem, rings me from prison most days for the free ten minutes. He has to pay for calls to anyone else out of the tiny amount he's paid for working in the kitchen.

At the end of his second call, he tells me he's glad he didn't get out; he wasn't ready. I still feel guilty and promise to pay for a few hypnotherapy sessions with Dr McCardell.

Lately he finds he's being asked by other First Nation prisoners for advice, and now that he's done jailhouse rehab and has a solid plan for the future, discovered he's a natural counsellor, and has set up a group.

They talk about their lives and discuss relapse prevention. He's spoken with the authorities and is working on plans to expand the idea to other prisons throughout NSW and then Australia and, he laughs, the World.

Heaven on Earth

The art of practice
by Susan Paget

I was originally going to begin this first column of the New Year with a fun resolution ritual. But then I read the room.

The latest news cycle got me thinking more along the lines of practices that we can do for the times when it seems like our world is going to hell in a handbasket.

Here are some ideas:

Thoughts and prayers

Why is there so much suffering? Why do bad things happen to good people? Sometimes the only answer to these questions is "Who knows?" Maybe we have to have some faith that there's a bigger picture out there, beyond our understanding.

But the problem is that faith in the unknown is on a spectrum. Some of us are believers and some of us doubt anything we can't see. No matter where you land on the chart, we can cultivate hope through practices that tap into our spiritual connection.

I personally do this through finding time to be still every day, even if it's for a few minutes, having a spiritual "tool box" I can open on demand – whether it's teachers to learn from and a community of soulful people to connect with, listening to uplifting music and treating our home like a sanctuary.

Those are just a few ways to have a daily communion with the divine and I find that when the outside world seems to really suck, they come into their own power and help me find my spiritual centre.

Stay off the news

When I'm not thinking about 'The Art of Practice', one of my main jobs is as a producer for an international news organisation. I'm not giving away any trade secrets by saying that bad news is incredibly good for this business.

Terrible events create a fear response that can activate an insatiable appetite for more information, and this results in ratings that go through the roof.

This is where a practice of self-restraint comes into play. After the basic information of a tragedy makes its way to me, I shut it down by not watching any news bulletins and adjusting preferences in my social media settings. This is a practice of discernment – the ability to judge well – and helps keep the nervous system in check.

And in case you're worried that you won't be informed on major news events, I can say from personal experience that monitoring my news exposure has never left me out of the information loop because – unless we're super off the grid – the essentials of a bad news story tend to find their way to us through basic small talk.

Find the beauty

During this recent bout of bad news, I was listening to a podcast with Rhonda Byrne, the Aussie who created the worldwide sensation *The Secret* where she was asked, "How can we possibly have a good life in this world when there is so much hate and ugliness around?"

She explained that while we tend to hyper-focus on the bad, the world is actually a magnificent place and the simplest, solidly good things in our lives

are often taken for granted.

And if you're privileged to be up here in Northern NSW, you don't have to look far to see this is true. A great practice is to regularly look around and take note of everything, even the smallest detail that has beauty.

As I write this I'm looking out at banana and mango trees, music is playing through the house, the sheer curtains of the living room are gently swaying with a summer breeze. The practice of being able to notice the positive and the abundance of life is best done daily, but it also doesn't have to be hard.

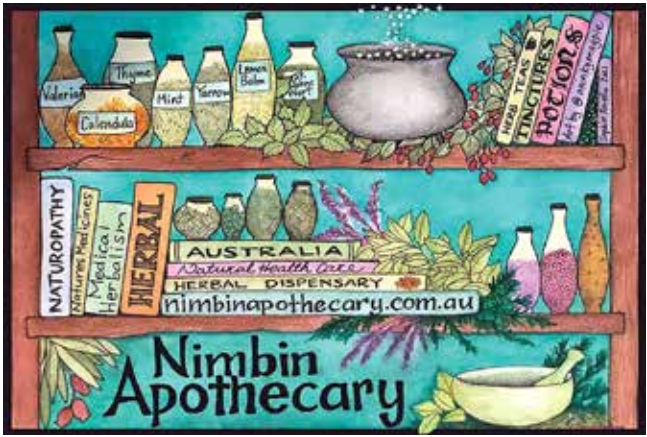
A simple journal entry noting all the beauty you can see, taking stock of the goodness out there while you have your first sip of morning coffee, having appreciation for a piece of art or finding solace in creating it can all do the trick of growing positivity. It doesn't take much to remind the brain to always look for the good.

This coming year – like the last year and the years before that – there will be an assortment of examples of how hell makes itself known on earth and that's why if there's one thing that I can impart for another year of practice, it is just how important our rituals and habits are.

Practice, showing up every day, focusing on ways to experience the most simple things like gratitude, optimism, peace and connection are the things that will be the difference between hating on and barely surviving this wild world or actually thriving in the wonder of it all.

Susan Paget is a television producer, well-being writer and yoga teacher who lives in Tunttable Creek. Listen to her podcast 'The Art of Practice', watch on YouTube @theartofpracticetv or connect at: theartofpracticeofficial@gmail.com

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The Three Treasures of Life

Happy 2026! May the year ahead bring you health, happiness, and a deep sense of fulfilment.

The start of a new year is always a perfect moment to pause, reflect, and consider what truly supports our wellbeing. If looking after your physical and mental health is in your resolutions, you're already taking an important step towards a more balanced and rewarding life.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, health is viewed through the lens of the Three Treasures: Jing, Qi, and Shen. These essential forces sustain life, vitality, and inner harmony.

Each plays a unique role, yet they are deeply interconnected, working together to support physical health, emotional balance, and mental clarity. By nurturing these treasures, we lay the foundation for long-lasting wellbeing.

Jing, or essence, represents the body's deepest energy reserve and the foundation of life. We are born with prenatal Jing, inherited from our parents, which sets the blueprint for growth, development, and vitality.

Throughout life, we build postnatal Jing through nutrition, rest, and healthy lifestyle choices. Jing influences growth, reproduction, immunity, resilience, and longevity.

Because it is finite, it's essential to protect it: ensure you get enough sleep, eat well, exercise moderately, and avoid overexertion or chronic stress.

Qi is the body's life force, flowing through our meridians and energising every function, from movement and warmth to digestion, immunity, and recovery.

Daily habits have a profound impact on Qi: what we eat, how we move, how we rest, and how we manage stress all affect its flow.

When Qi moves smoothly, we feel energetic, our bodies work efficiently, and we recover from illness more readily. Gentle exercise, mindful breathing, and a balanced daily routine all help to cultivate and maintain Qi.

Shen represents the mind and spirit, reflecting our emotional balance, mental clarity, and inner calm. It relies on strong and harmonious Qi for support.

Shen flourishes when we take time to quiet the mind and connect with ourselves through meditation, gentle movement, or creative expression such as writing, music, art, or dance. Social



by Chi Fung Lee

connections are equally important: supportive friends, family, and involvement in the community strengthen Shen, helping us remain centred, focused, and emotionally resilient.

When the Three Treasures are out of balance, certain signs may appear. Jing depletion can show as chronic fatigue, weakness in the lower back or knees, cold hands and feet, low libido, poor immunity, premature ageing, greying or thinning hair, difficulty concentrating, or slow recovery from exertion.

Qi deficiency often presents as persistent tiredness, shortness of breath, weak voice, spontaneous sweating, poor digestion, bloating, frequent colds, pale complexion, low motivation, and slow recovery from illness.

Shen deficiency may

manifest as anxiety, restlessness, emotional instability, difficulty concentrating, poor memory, insomnia, or a sense of inner emptiness. Shen depends on balanced Qi and other vital substances to remain strong and steady.

By recognising these patterns and consciously caring for Jing, Qi, and Shen, we nurture body, mind, and spirit. Simple daily practices such as gentle movement, mindful breathing, connecting with loved ones, and nourishing rituals help build a strong, supportive foundation for vitality, resilience, and enduring wellbeing throughout the year.

Nourishing Three Treasures Tea

Gently simmer a small handful of goji berries, three Chinese red dates (jujube), one to two slices of fresh ginger, and a teaspoon of Schisandra berries in two cups of water for 10 minutes.

Strain, add honey if desired, and sip slowly to nourish Jing, strengthen Qi, and calm Shen, promoting overall vitality, balance, and wellbeing.

Chi Fung Lee is an AHPRA & AACMA registered acupuncturist in Coffee Camp. Phone 0478-239-298.



So they say...

Will I or won't I?

I enjoy reading what you guys have to say about relationships. I'm not in a relationship but my question is, do I want a relationship? I'm honestly not sure if I do or don't.

– Luke, Lennox Head

with Uncle Norm & Aunty Maj

Magenta says...

For some people, being in a relationship is a priority, others, like yourself, not so much. And then there are those who enjoy living alone and wouldn't give it up for anyone. There's room for us all, but I suspect you are afraid of getting into a relationship and getting hurt. Aren't we all? However, even those who 'live happily ever after' have to experience the pain of one or the other dying.

A friend told me she has the same dilemma and maybe you could meet up because at least you would have something in common. Or maybe you're into men?

What matters is that you stop prevaricating and, if you really do want a relationship, then be honest with yourself and make an effort to find someone with whom to share the incomparable heartiness of unconditional love.

I don't know how old you are, but there are no age limits for love. In fact, it has been found that love at a later age is richer and more enduring than young love.

Scientists have found that married men live longer than unmarried men. So that could be an incentive. Unfortunately, unmarried women live longer than married ones. I'm assuming they are referring to being married to a man, so maybe another woman might be a safer bet.

Luke, maybe you are someone who will have to resign yourself to the lifelong sadness that comes from never being satisfied. If you really were happy being alone, you never would have made the effort to send your obscure, befuddled letter to us.

The best advice is to get out of your head and get out there and enjoy your life and listen to your heart. It knows.

"Infuse your life with action. Don't wait for it to happen. Make it happen. Make your own future. Make your own hope. Make your own love." – Albert Einstein

Send your relationship problems to:
magentaappelpye@gmail.com

Are you still biting the hand that feeds?

Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

Symbols are real, but... superficial. At core all is the same. We need solid holds, but aim to advance as time progresses.

Our world has many benefits, but this column decries greedily grabbing too much of nature, as if resources are unlimited, money grows on trees. Wrongly attuned mainstream habits – dining on biosphere, flora, fauna, community capital.

A key lesson of Terania Creek/ Nightcap, Franklin River, koala, and environmental protests: people revolt. Wars, disputes, disease, false pride, poverty, class bias – unnecessarily flaunting past milestones. Too many rats in a small cage battle each other as well.

It is 2026. Look upon life not as opportunist grab-bag, but a delicate dance. Tolerance and self-awareness both are needed. 'Strength through diversity' and 'to each their own', universal truths. Fighting other

cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, flora and fauna, rebounds back.

In this regard, vegan focus on animal justice, while admirable, seems taken too far by some people, or if you object to torture, subterfuge, confinement, pandemics, lies, deceptive labelling, deforestation, cruelty, live shipping, fires, floods and global warming... not far enough. See: www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/why-meat-is-bad-for-the-environment

Anyone bitten by a horse fly, wasp or tick, knows nature can be mean: survival of the fittest. Funnelweb, redback and trapdoor spiders, carnivorous plants, pythons, eagles and foxes killing fowl. Why not treat animals as badly as they sometimes treat us?

Life can be tough. In response, many people assume they have dominion over nature. People in Abrahamic religions can translate 'dominion' in Genesis 1-26 as 'exploit', instead of 'caretake'.

Both translations of the original Aramaic text are possible. Many agnostics who reject supernatural



A dog's life

by Michael Brooke

I was with my dog in thick scrub on a long walk, mountainous country, deep gullies, heavily wooded.

I noticed things about my dog. How completely she is 'in' the world, how nature wraps itself around her, earth and sky, the chaos of flora all as one thing, the whole wild world singularly known to her.

A sniffy hairy creature, four legs and a tail and simplicity, a joy for her to go bush, nose to the ground hunting.

Wilderness is a dog's paradise – sadly not mine. I'm a product of a culture. I'm civilised, so indoctrinated by technology I've forgotten what it is my dog profoundly knows.

Tongue hanging out, eyes bright, she knows deeply intuitively a wild untrammelled reality that I have dis-remembered. It's said I'm more intelligent than her, yet walking in the forest I stumble where she flows.

My dog's behaviour leads me to think I should learn again to trust my natural self. Whatever that is. How would it be for me to walk down the main street of my home town Kyogle, as happy as my dog, with no inhibitions? As naked as she is?

Would the people I meet be friendly, trusting and loving? I think about it. Have I the courage to be as bladder and bowel uninhibited as my dog?

Or more practically, could I be as tail-wagging friendly and trusting as she is? If I tried such things it's likely I'd be jailed for obscenity.

A metropolis is a man-made forest. It is artificially thing-ridden, a tub-thumping place of politics and religion, economics and commerce, it is fantastical. It is all hard glass, brick and concrete against which a dog lifts a leg to pee.

Sometimes I want to get away from it. I imagine going bush, wind in trees and thunder and rain on leaves being the loudest things,



and on a hot summer day there's a silence which is unfathomable.

That's where my dog runs free. I envy her. In town there's the howl of machines; for safety she and I are on a leash; I wonder who is the leader? Out there, walking in silence, I begin to feel at peace.

I feel "I am beyond the time. I might have sold my hands or sold my voice and mind to the arguments of power that go blind against what they would destroy."

A forest, you see, is not as dangerous as a town or city or nation state.

Happiness hit

by Magenta Appel -Pye

I have been working hard to try to keep my spirits up lately and found myself thinking about what it is that gives me joy and lifts me up.

I have discovered over the years that 'eudamonic' happiness, that which is gained from helping others. It lasts longer than hedonistic happiness. Helping others makes us feel good about ourselves and increases our sense of self-worth much more than buying an item we don't need and will probably never use or wear once.

I have been a music teacher for over 40 years, but am now pretty much retired. However, it is depressing not doing what I have worked hard on all my life and love doing. So lately I have been teaching ukulele to U3A students who are very keen and appreciative and doing extremely well.

It gives me great pleasure to give the gift of music, especially those who thought it was too late to learn an instrument. I also realised that singing in itself is like a breath of fresh air, well that is exactly what you are doing to your lungs when you sing. It doesn't matter if you are in tune or not, it only matters that you put your heart and soul into it and belt out those songs like no-one is listening.

So, I started a small singing group that is not a class, is not a choir, and there will be no performances, concerts or judgements. No stress, no cost, just singing. And that is joyous.

But what about the rest of the week? Gardening was always a balm for the soul and good medicine for body and mind but, because of physical limitations, my garden has gotten away from me and what used to give me great joy I currently find overwhelming.

Enter guardian angel Kathy, a member of my ukulele class, whose greatest joys are gardening and helping others, so it was a perfect fit when she offered to help me with my garden.



Defy ecological lies about global warming and ecological destruction. See: www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/food-systems-and-the-environment

Too much of a good thing is bad. When populations were less, what we consumed had few worries; today we overgraze.

Regions are becoming poorer

in nature as people cultivate land in ever greater numbers. It is not farming or manufacturing that harms, but how. Agriculture can be regenerative, organic, herbivore, rewilding land and housing people.

There are no essential differences between people, nature and human beliefs.

Gaia is also... us. Do not bite the hand that feeds.



She proceeded to do so with no fuss, no expectation of reward, sustained by the joy she gets from helping others. A true blessing for both of us.

Being a good receiver is also something that can make you happy. It allows the other person to get the full happiness hit from being generous, of help, caring, and makes them feel good about themselves.

Over the years I have learnt to receive graciously. I always say, "Thank you so much, how kind of you." I love it when their faces light up as they receive effusive praise that is all too often lacking in our lives.

I am always on the lookout to help, especially when I am feeling low as this is the fastest way I know to raise my spirits.

However, I have learnt not to force my help on others or give unsolicited advice but rather to pay attention to the balance of give and take and give only when others ask or are in dire straits. I have learnt to offer gently, without insisting.

I don't go out much, so another form of community service I do is writing these, and So They Say columns each month. I know it helps, in a small way, to keep this wonderful vibrant newspaper going and I hope they are enjoyed by many.

So, if you want a happiness hit this year, do some volunteering, help a neighbour, smile and talk to an old person. Or a young one. Write a letter to the paper. Anything that builds meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging to your community.

Did you hear about the mushroom that was invited to the party because he was a fungi?

ASTRO FORECASTS



by Tina Mews
What's happening
in the heavens?

The astrology of 2026: a pivotal year for humanity

We have passed the midway point of a decade defined by global transformation. The journey into the unknown started on January 12, 2020, with the deeply challenging Saturn-Pluto conjunction in Capricorn. It coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to a massive shift of power toward governmental control and the transference of wealth to the plutocracy, an elite or ruling class whose power derives from their wealth.

By the end of 2020, Saturn and Jupiter aligned at the zero-degree Aquarius, the sign of humanity and collective power. Their conjunction initiated a new Air Age of information, technology, space exploration but also supports humanistic principles and the transference of power back to the people. It is an era of roughly 150 years in which we master the realms of air, mind, and communication. It has replaced the Earth Age that correlates with the past 200-year period of industrialisation, heightened materialism and accelerated exploitation of the Earth's resources.

Then Pluto made its first entry into Aquarius in 2023 coinciding with the launching of Chat GPT and the introduction of Artificial Intelligence to the world. The transformation of our reality by AI is only at its beginning and like anything that concentrates so much power and influence, it can be either a blessing or a curse. Pluto has an orbit of 248 years and each time it moves through Aquarius, new worldviews emerge from the rubble of the old. Last time it occurred during the Age of Enlightenment marked by the paradigm-shifting French and American Revolutions (1777-1798).

During the cycle before that (1532–1552), Copernicus published his heliocentric model of the solar system, which ultimately shattered the prevailing religious worldview and planted the seeds of a new, science-based understanding of reality. When Pluto is in Aquarius, the call for liberation from old limiting structures and belief systems stirs humanity. Pluto will be in Aquarius until 2044, coinciding with a realisation that humanity is no longer the centre of everything but part of the Earth's ecosystem with an ever-expanding awareness of a much larger cosmos. **The interstellar comet 3I Atlas just made its closest approach to Earth before heading toward Jupiter in mid-March 2026 – on its way out of the solar system.**

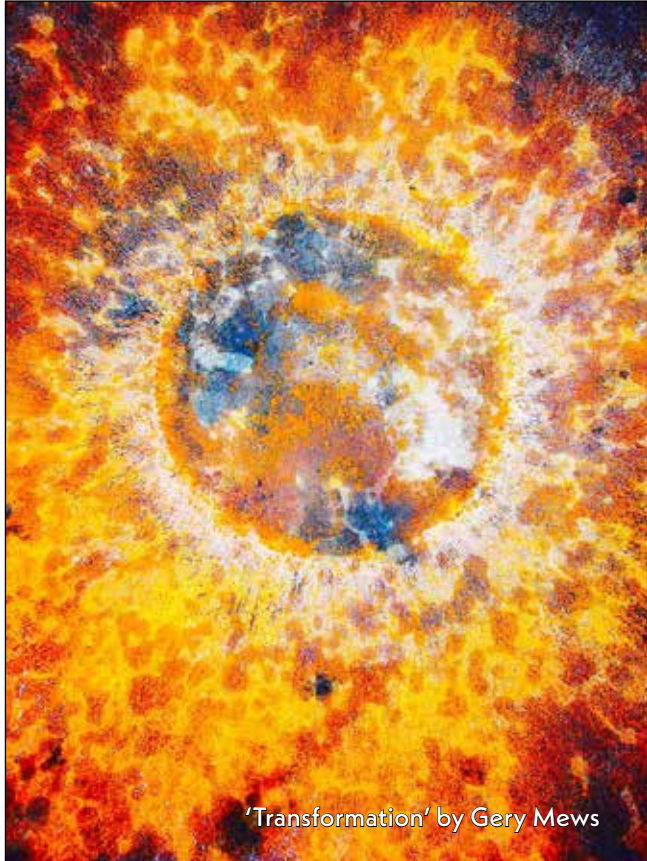
Besides Pluto which has already settled in its new sign, all other outer planets will do the same during 2026. Saturn, Uranus and Neptune entered their new signs firstly during 2025 and are currently in their 'old signs' for a last visit of review and reflection. But they all will settle in their new signs during 2026 while making trines and sextiles to one-another that are forming at the midpoint of the Saturn-Neptune conjunction at the zero-degree Aries point! And all of them are moving from the more receptive earth and water signs to the creative and active fire and air signs. This has not happened before in this way in recorded history signalling the start of a completely new era for everyone living on this planet.

2026 starts with a triple conjunction between Venus, Sun and Mars in Capricorn during January 7 – 14 (exact on January 8). This synchronised moment signals an opportunity to purposefully sow the seeds of creative self-expression for the year ahead, guided by both rational thought and intuition. Jupiter forms an opposition to the triple conjunction, potentially opening a path to the resolution of an old conflict.

This is followed by a line-up of planets in Aquarius during January 21 – February 7 involving Mars, Pluto, Sun, Venus and Mercury. As the inner planets form conjunctions with deep probing Pluto our "New Year vows" are put to the test. Themes around values, motivation, power and self-empowerment, but also truth and change are activated. The Mars-Pluto conjunction on January 8 can be particularly volatile and emotionally explosive.

Neptune's definite entry into Aries on January 26 plays a major role in the current process of shifting paradigms and changing worldviews. Neptune has a 165-year orbit and governs our imagination and illusions as well as our spiritual needs. Neptune represents the collective consciousness out of which our shared dreams, ideas and beliefs emerge that shape reality, linking it also to the subtle influences of mass media on our subconscious.

The last time Neptune transited Aries was from 1861-1875, which coincided with the American Civil War and the rise of abolitionist movements as well as with the emergence of a New Age Spirituality as a growing resistance to society's materialism and rationalism.



'Transformation' by Gery Mews

Neptune will be in Aries until 2039, and this could manifest as new spiritual breakthroughs, and a complete transformation of how humanity approaches faith, religion and purpose. Neptune's evolutionary intention in Aries is to take responsibility for our own mission without getting swept away in somebody else's ideology, thereby maintaining our personal integrity and sovereignty.

Then the first Solar Eclipse follows on February 17 on the last degrees of Aquarius and closely squaring Uranus. The Sabian Symbol for the 29th degree of Aquarius reveals the energetic frequency of this eclipse: "A butterfly emerging from a chrysalis" revealing the ability of every human being to participate in the evolution of consciousness after "the emergence from a critical state of transition." Dane Rudhyar. The eclipse occurs just three days before the Saturn-Neptune conjunction, leading up to the probably the most important planetary alignment of the year.

The Saturn-Neptune conjunction on February 20 at zero-degree Aries, a world degree – meaning it affects us all, marks the beginning of a new cycle representing the manifestation of collective ideals in politics, religion and society. Neptune stands for vision and Saturn represents discipline. On a personal level, 2026 is the year where we can ask ourselves what we want to create and what we are passionate about, as Aries puts an emphasis of self-responsibility and taking initiative. This is highly important as these alignments blur the boundaries between reality and illusion, truth and lies, fact and fiction.

The Saturn-Neptune conjunction occurs every 36-37 years, dissolving boundaries that have become too rigid and crystallised. However, it hasn't happened at the zero-degree Aries for thousands of years. The conjunction brings both disillusionment with existing systems and the envisioning of new possibilities. In Aries, it reminds us to be self-motivated and an active part in building the future.

The conjunction is also about popular insurrections that are usually fuelled by ideological beliefs that have their roots in a frustrated population. Aries is ruled by Mars, the planet of war. Mars will play a major role during 2026 and beyond as the current ruler of Saturn and Neptune. **It may signal a significant turning point in the Russia-Ukraine war because the Saturn-Neptune cycle has been associated historically with important developments in Russia.** The cycle now ending started in 1989-90 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, revolutions in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the USSR.

Uranus enters Gemini on April 26 and remains in this sign until 2033. Uranus was discovered in 1781, coinciding with the American and French Revolutions. It has been associated with the desire for liberation from oppressive structures symbolising the rebel or anarchist who breaks through conventions. The energetic frequency is sudden,

exciting, unexpected, nervous, unpredictable and electrifying. Uranus represents the archetype of chaos and change, freedom, originality, disruption but also scientific breakthroughs.

Uranus visits Gemini every 84 years marking a seven-year period when innovation to do with technological advancement, communication, transport, air and space travel, thinking, education and learning are accelerated. The path is clear for the latest technological achievements that will completely turn our lives upside down in the coming years. On the downside, we need to address the potential impact of technology and AI on brain function and mental health, as well as the environmental effects because of its high need of electricity and water.

Uranus in Gemini is an invitation to keep a flexible frame of mind allowing for a multiplicity of perspectives. It favours a more rational approach of emotional detachment, thus serving as a helpful balance to the influence of the Saturn-Neptune conjunction in Aries, under which individuals or societies can be drawn into polarising emotionally charged belief systems. What makes 2026 so extra-ordinary from an astrological perspective is the synchronised combination between the more paternalistic and ideologically coloured Saturn-Neptune conjunction and the more egalitarian, emotionally detached and grass-root orientated Uranus-Pluto trine.

Will we be able to dance with it and initiate a consciousness revolution in our own lives that brings us closer to a humanitarian and fairer society, or will it make the gap between 'us and them', empowered and disempowered, rich and poor etc even more divisive and conflict-ridden? We will have gained more clarity about where we are going by the end of the year!

Let's remember that 2026 is Year of the Fire Horse in the Chinese zodiac as was 1966, the time of the last Uranus-Pluto conjunction, the seeding time of this 127-year cycle of revolution and evolution. The Fire Horse year occurs only once every 60 years and is traditionally associated with revolutionary changes, powerful personalities, and dramatic events. 1965/66 was a period marked by civil rights and anti-war movements, student revolts and when an emerging counterculture challenged governments and the established order on many fronts exposing lies, corruption and deceit.

We can expect another wave of protests against globalisation, digitalisation, 'Big Brother' type of control systems and autocratic leaders. At the same time, there is great hope that new technologies can bring liberation and improve our lives. A key question is whether these improvements will be available to all, or only to an elite few.

The second most significant period of the year occurs in July, when Jupiter enters Leo and the lunar nodes shift from the Virgo/Pisces axis to Leo and Aquarius. Jupiter in Leo activates and sets fire to the triangle constellated between Uranus, Neptune and Pluto by opposing Puto, forming a trine with Neptune and a sextile with Uranus. The Jupiter-Pluto cycle started back in 2020 like the Saturn-Pluto and the Saturn- Jupiter cycles.

On July 14-15, Jupiter has reached the halfway point in this cycle coinciding with the first exact Uranus-Pluto trine and the 3rd exact Uranus-Neptune sextile releasing a great amount of creative power and potential for anyone who has an important planet or point positioned on the 5th degree in their natal chart. Jupiter brings in the passion of the heart, fosters awareness, challenges and complements the vision and mental energy of Pluto in Aquarius.

The trine to Neptune supports the imaginary force of the soul to particularise the vision we are longing to cultivate. When we focus our attention truthfully onto our inner core (Neptune), we know exactly what supports or hinders our growth, what empowers us or needs to be left behind (Pluto) and what we stand for as an individual in relation to society, systems, and the collective (Jupiter). The message is that change (Uranus) starts from within as the cosmos continues to accelerate us forward.

Navigation by the Stars: Personal and/or Relationship Astrology; Life Cycles and Your Year Ahead Transits: Plans, Directions, Concerns for 2026-2027; in person or on-line consultations; mobile: 0457-903-957 email: star-loom@hotmail.com Gift vouchers available!

'The Astrology of 2026: Transits, Ingresses, Eclipses' February 7, 10am-4pm at Lillifield Community Centre. All welcome! Register via contacts above.

Aries

This is an extremely important year for you as the two outer planets Saturn and Neptune conjoin in your sun sign on February 20, initiating a 36-year cycle of actively working on manifesting your dreams. This constellation affects everyone, but those born in March in particular.

It combines a sense of reality with an inner vision and invites you to walk your path more consciously. It is essential to clarify priorities first, take responsibility and then get going. Mars, your ruler and planet of drive is in Aries during April 10 – May 19, boosting your energy level and making it the most powerful period of the year to start a new project.

With Neptune in Aries for the next 14 years, you may consider a more balanced approach concerning your energy output. Put some time aside for rest and communicating with your inner worlds; focus on your spiritual development as well as your material progress. The potential for growth and change is great, if you can use it with purpose.

Taurus

Uranus' move from Taurus to Gemini on April 26 will be an important cosmic event. The past seven years have been marked by profound changes that have helped you with breaking old patterns. While Uranus is in Gemini until 2033, a phase begins in which communication, flexibility and new ways of thinking are in the foreground.

While in Gemini, Uranus could revolutionise your way of making money triggering feelings of uncertainty. Some familiar routines may have to change. The best time for starting new projects is during 19 May until June 29 when Mars, planet of drive and action, visits your sun sign.

The Solar eclipse on February 17 could open new professional pathways or even a new life direction. The lunar nodes shift to Leo and Aquarius in the second half of the year, and Jupiter enters Leo on June 30 initiating a one year – eighteen month phase where you can shine through innovative projects. Those who work in artistic professions in particular benefit from this energetic imprint.

Gemini

Uranus, planet of sudden changes, continues its once every 84-year transit through Gemini from April 26 until 2032/33. Prepare for the unexpected including quantum leaps and surprising encounters that could be life-altering. Sharpen your awareness and imagine new goals and objectives which may become reality if you trust the wisdom and guidance of the higher mind.

Mars, the planet of drive and energy, is in Gemini during June 29 until August 12 forming an exact conjunction with Uranus on July 4. This transit can potentially be quite disruptive as Uranus and Mars together represent explosive forces with rushes of energy. The underlying need is a more authentic expression of self, with space to move.

Channel the incoming energies into areas of your life that are feeling limiting and ready for innovation. Get involved in creative projects that excite you, but do not throw the baby out with the bath water. Have a plan and experiment with different options. Take your time, consciously balance periods of activity with resting and nurturing body and soul. Overstimulation is a possibility during 2026, especially for Geminis who are born in May.

Cancer

Jupiter, the planet of growth and good fortune, continues its transit through Cancer until the end of June. This gives you another six months of discovering new parts within yourself that would like to grow and

be nurtured.

Saturn and Neptune enter your 10th house of career and life direction during January and February. Their conjunction on February 20 will initiate a new cycle of your public persona. This may require the dissolution of old dreams that seem unrealistic by now. Instead, you might feel a calling to work in the helping fields and take on a leading role with new responsibilities.

Mercury will be in Cancer during June 2 until August 10 and retrograde during June 30 until July 24. Take advantage of this transit for reflecting on past experiences, sorting out unfinished business and finishing off some loose ends. Mars will be in Cancer during August 12 until September 29 pushing you to even work harder. Plan some time for rest and relaxation to recharge your batteries during this period.

Leo

Jupiter, planet of good fortune and abundance will be in Leo from June 30 until 26 July 2027 initiating a once every 12-year cycle of new possibilities. This is a period of letting your light shine, growing and expanding in new ways, living and expressing your heart's desire and embarking on an adventure to greater authenticity.

The nodal axis shifts to Leo and Aquarius on July 27 (until March 2028) with the South Lunar Node being in Leo, a cycle that repeats every 18.6 years. You may become aware of old attachments to drama or the need of having to be 'special' that you can now release and let go of, thereby finding new freedom through detachment. This process assists you in becoming closer to your essence and inner truth.

The Solar eclipse in Leo on August 13 brings powerful shifts, especially for those born during August 8 – 18, igniting endings and new beginnings in your self-expression. You may gain clarity about what supports and what hinders your growth, what is empowering and what is depleting.

Mars, the planet of action, boosts your energy level and fighting spirit during September 28 until November 28. Channel the energy into projects that are worthwhile to go for.

Virao

Uranus moves into Gemini on April 26. Over the next 7 years your life direction and professional path is destined to go through changes that ultimately will give you more independence. Virgos born during August are especially due for some surprising transformation in 2026 concerning their career and life goals.

This once-in-a-lifetime transit brings new perspectives, along with a desire to learn something new or to reform your path so it becomes more flexible. Stay open for experiments and diversify your options.

The South Lunar Node continues to travel through Virgo until July 28. Since the beginning of 2025, you may have been asked to release old patterns such as being over-critical or overly fixated on doing things "the right way", thereby setting into motion a process of re-imagining the future.

During 2026, you can gain inner confidence, even when the direction is not yet clear. Tune in to what is to come and focus on sustainable developments. Then you can discern more clearly what strengthens you and what you can let go. This clarity gives rise to new freedom – and an order that feels more authentic and alive.

Libra

Relationships and encounters with others will play a central role during 2026. Saturn and Neptune are conjoined in the early degrees of Aries, your opposite sign, from February onwards. Neptune supports a longing for fusion while Saturn favours the

separate ego but also brings clarity around healthy boundaries. Take it as a time of restructuring your contracts by honouring your deepest needs, either for more closeness or more distance.

Uranus moves into Gemini on April 26, opening new horizons. Especially Libras born in September feel this impulse. Uranus expands your thinking and ignites your interest in learning, traveling or exchanging ideas with inspirational people.

Venus, your ruling planet, enters her once every 18 months retrograde phase on October 4, partly retracing her steps through your sun sign (until November 14). You may feel a need for retreat giving yourself time to reflect on your own values and what makes you feel happy. Social activities and personal relationships go through a phase of review. This time of withdrawal is helpful for re-charging your batteries.

Scorpio

2026 brings a lot of activity to your solar house of life direction and career. Jupiter will be in Leo from June 30 until July 2027 attracting fresh opportunities to this area of your life. You may receive extra acknowledgement and rewards for your efforts.

Then, the Lunar South Node arrives in Leo on July 27, followed by a Solar eclipse on August 12. These mixed influences will bring equally endings and new beginnings. This ultimately brings more clarity about your true purpose and what you really want to achieve. Setting priorities is essential as you may not be able to continue with all projects on the list. Know what is worthwhile to carry through and what needs to be left behind. Clarity replaces control – and that's where real strength comes from.

Neptune and Saturn in Aries are activating your solar house of health and daily routine from February onwards. This could be an important time to establish a more balanced work–rest lifestyle.

Venus will retrograde partly through your Sun sign from October 4 to November 14, bringing lessons of review around your investments, whether relational, energetic, or otherwise.

Sasittarius

2026 is a year of re-orientation, after a phase of searching and questioning has finally ended. Saturn and Neptune are co-present in Aries from February onward promoting creative self-expression and the grounding of imaginative ideas into 3D reality.

Uranus enters your relationship sector on April 26 bringing new movement to relationships and partnerships, may they be personal or professional. Feel encouraged to approach others more openly and flexibly because Uranus in Gemini can bring inspiring new encounters or fresh momentum to existing connections during the next seven years.

Jupiter, your ruling planet, is in Cancer until July, deepening your spiritual connections and strengthening your interest in the occult and in what lies below the surface. Then, on June 30, Jupiter moves into fiery Leo, directing your attention outward toward new discoveries and the expansion into new horizons.

Pluto in Aquarius opens your mind to deeper insights and transforms the way you think and communicate. Paying more attention to conversations and encounters with others could bring empowering new insights. You no longer want to convince, but to understand – and be understood.

Capricorn

The year starts with a line-up of planets in Capricorn and a triple conjunction between

Venus, Sun and Mars during January 7 – 14 (exact on January 8). This synchronised moment in time is favourable for planning your year ahead and setting your intentions of what you want to achieve during the next 12 months and beyond.

2026 is a year for courageous decisions and forming new inner structures. Saturn, your sign ruler, will be in Aries and co-present with Neptune from February onward focusing on family, your origin and emotional roots. It challenges you to review old patterns of responsibility and obligations. Working through past conditioning clears the way not only to more simplicity but also to a new freedom. This is an important time for strengthening your foundations in a literal as well as symbolic sense.

Jupiter is in Cancer until July directing the emphasis to the topic of closeness, connectedness and shared responsibility. If you open yourself to others for support, you will find that your call is answered. Building trust in others and having faith during the first part of the year lays the foundation for future joint projects.

Aquarius

A line-up of planets in Aquarius during January 21 – February 7 sets the tone for the first part of the year. This can be highly transformational and creative, depending on how you move with the energies. Especially the Mars-Pluto conjunction on January 28 can be volatile and needs channelling into worthwhile projects that demand your determination and focus. Know your own strengths and weaknesses!

Uranus, your sign ruler, moves into Gemini on April 26 for the next seven years. Uranus is the planet of change and reform, initiating new forms of self-expression that provide you with more freedom and flexibility.

A powerful Solar eclipse on February 17 is followed by the move of the North Lunar Node into Aquarius on July 27. It initiates an 18-months phase of endings and new beginnings to do with you becoming more the person you are meant to be strengthening your need for inner clarity and emotional stability.

Jupiter's journey through Leo, your opposite sign, starts on June 30 shifting your attention to relationships. Find a new balance between closeness and distance, between being true to yourself while remaining open to the other. "Feel with your head and think with your heart!"

Pisces

Your sign ruler Neptune leaves Pisces after many years and enters Aries on January 26 followed by Saturn on February 15. This closes a cycle that began in 2012 – a long phase of awareness, search and inner growth.

Now a new chapter is beginning that requires more clarity and willingness to action. Especially the late-born Pisces – from about March 13 – feel this transition particularly strongly. Some things that have carried you so far lose meaning, while others gain influence. Aries demands autonomy and helps with sorting out priorities.

Uranus moves into Gemini on April 26. For the next seven years, your home, life will go through phases of change. Especially Pisceans born during February may experience movement in their living environment or in their family structures.

Mars, planet of action, transits Pisces from March 3 until April 9 boosting your energy level and motivation to initiate something new. This partly coincides with Mercury retracing its steps through your sun sign from February 27 until March 21. Take time to reflect on how you want to move forward with your plans once the retrograde cycle has ended.