

Complete this sentence...

by Alex Charles

Doon Doon residents and the broader Northern Rivers community were shocked into an action of solidarity on Saturday 18th June for Bob and Mitzi Hodgkins and their eight children. Bob Hodgkins has had his appeal dismissed, and is now serving 20 months in Grafton Gaol, with a fifteen month non-parole period, for driving while disqualified. Bob, a repeat offender, lost his licence largely due to unpaid parking fines. The family live on a two-acre property with their children, who are aged from 2 to 17 years. From the oldest to youngest they are Camilla, Ira, Lear,

Eileen, Christi, Lali, Della, and Lenny. The kids play music, and call themselves The Perch Creek Family Jug Band. The fundraising and awareness appeal, in the form of a 24-hour gig featuring the band, was held at their property to highlight Bob's plight, and to raise money to continue with the kids' music lessons, to pay for their solicitor and to assist in their weekly transportation costs to Grafton. The family income has been drastically reduced, and Mitzi receives \$40.00 a week less than a single mother, because Bob is in gaol, and the \$5.00 per day that Bob receives is spent on phone calls home. Mitzi said, "The kids are doing good, and I'm amazed

at the beautiful outpouring of community sentiment". When asked how her partner was coping, Mitzi stated, "Bob looks at every experience in a positive light." The New South Wales law was changed some time ago, when a young man was beaten to death in Long Bay Gaol after submitting himself to the authorities and doing weekend detention to pay off fines. Citizens are no longer allowed to voluntarily do time in order to pay off fines. How the bastardisation of this process has occurred, and why a father of eight children is languishing in Grafton Gaol for what are basically unpaid parking fines, is hard to comprehend.



Happy birthday, son. Lear (left) celebrates turning 14 holding baby Lenny, with mother Mitzi Hodgkins (right).
Picture: Alex Charles

The day of the gathering was Lear's 14th birthday, and sympathisers pondered what the magistrate did with his son when he turned 14. But the shadow soon passes, and there

is talk of a welcome home party when Bob is released in June 2006. Optimism, courage, and fortitude are what's needed in this new world, where hypocrisy can lock the doors to freedom.

Family Centre

Great news for Nimbin families with the opening of the Peace Park Playground. That is such a fantastic community achievement. Good on you Nimbin Residents. The Family Centre, at Lilly Pilly Place on Sibley St, has had some improvements of its own, with the entrance to the building covered so we can stay dry when entering, and we have a little outdoor space for craft & painting activities. Local builders Michael and Mark have done so well, it looks like it was always there.

There are now 3 playgroups a week at the Centre: Mondays for Toddlers, Tuesdays for babies, Thursdays for Kids & Dads, all between 10.30am and 12.30pm. All children under 5, accompanied by a carer, are welcome. On Tuesday 19th July, Gail Louder, dentist, is coming at the Centre at 11am to give information on teething and dental care. You are invited to come and bring your questions. For more info, ring Marie on 6689-0423 Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays from 10am to 3pm. Hope to see you.

Re-defining the garden

Members of the Nimbin Garden Club went on a two-hour bushwalk in June, to inspect the landcare work being carried out co-operatively at Len and Kaye Martin's MO, the Nimbin Rocks Co-operative. The 600-acre property borders Goolmangar Creek to the south of Nimbin village, and rises up the escarpment to the west. The spectacular views were much admired by the Garden Club members during their



expedition. Work over the years has focused on weed removal and encouraging regrowth. Plans now include more

bush regeneration and the establishment of wildlife corridors, and improving the creek banks, as part of a long-term plan. As Kaye Martin said, "It's a very special place here, and we are making an ongoing commitment to regeneration." For information on the future activities of the Nimbin Garden Club, which meets monthly phone Lindy on 6689-1217, or Mac on 6689-0043.



Picture: Sue Stock

Bahzooley warms wintry night

On Friday 24th June, it was time again for the bi-annual Nimbin Central School Bahzooley, where students of all ages took to the stage with their innovative and entertaining performances. Singing, dancing and acting talents were showcased, with some pieces created without any adult help. Four singing groups of different ages, led by Val Hopkins, a new teenage school band, the Rock Lobster dance, and, by popular demand, the Can-Can, entirely performed by our students, were only a few highlights of this

delightful event. The Nimbin Central School Bahzooley is a combined school and P & C fundraiser, with proceeds from the door supporting the art department. Proceeds from the P & C raffle and the canteen are donated to the school for specific purposes, for example excursion subsidies or playground shade, to name the most recent. If you want to be involved and have a say please contact Manuela Geiss (P & C President) through the Nimbin Central School's office, phone 6689-1355.



Performers. Primary choir (above), Alecia van Hest (right).



Pictures: Sue Stock

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