

# Cattle Truck Anniversary – Saturday 12th August

A celebration of hippies surviving and thriving in Nimbin, despite 30 years of 'asymmetrical' policing.

## The notorious raid of '76

by Salty

In the first year or two of the Tunttable Falls Co-Ordination Co-Operative there were many meetings discussing what we should be doing on the property, with no agreement on whether people could construct their own shelter. In our 900 member Athenian democracy, we couldn't seem to get any lasting agreement. This meant that everyone was living in the original farm buildings, or even under them, living and eating together.

Someone, fed up with the delays, or bored with the ongoing encounter group, just went out and built a "house". That forced the issue, and it did not take long, once it was clear there was a common urge for many of us to step back from the intense communal living situation. We had to work out a procedure for house site selection and then getting community approval, to stop it turning into a free for all.

So, in August 1976, I was one of those still living in an original structure, at the Centre, in one of the five original pig-sties. Being taller than the average pig, I had raised the roof, and added doors and windows to suit. It was temporary, but dry and comfortable enough at the time. Just above were the community veggie gardens, and winding below was Tunttable Creek. I had four neighbours, and the Tin Shed was the kitchen for our hamlet. It was winter, in our subtropical narrow valley, which meant warm days, but frosty nights. During the nights ripe chokos would fall onto the roof waking

me with the bang, and then roll slowly down the roof ending with a thump on the ground. Sometimes bandicoots, lizards or snakes came in.

On August 12th, in the dark before dawn, I was awoken from my slumbers by a police officer pointing a gun in my face, and asking me if I wanted to be charged with a cap of smack or a bag of grass? I told him there was nothing there. He said that didn't matter, what did I want to be charged with, a cap of smack or a bag of grass? He was still pointing his gun. The words sank in. I said that seeing as I didn't have anything, he'd have to decide that for himself, whereupon he ordered me to get dressed and get outside to join the others, already herded into a group near the Tin Shed. No pot had been found on or near anyone arrested at the Tin Shed, nor was there any effort made to find anything.

(They couldn't find much of anything anyway, because there was a pot drought on, and as far as anyone on the property knew, there was no pot. They were very lucky that morning to find the one person on the property sleeping with a "stash" of twelve ounces in a powdered milk tin by their bed.)

Twenty yards away, through his plastic windows, we could see Terry McGee at his desk in the Cow Bales, lights on, already on the phone, surrounded by his files and books, and being completely ignored by the police. Barney and Ruth though had been marched out of their Cream Room right next to it. If you looked like a "hippy", you were going. We stood together in the

cold, the sky growing lighter, wondering what was happening for the rest of the community.

Our "Tin Shed" group was marched down to the creek crossing, and up to the council road, where we were merged with the Echo, White House, Pala, and Wattle Creek residents that had been rounded up. While we stood analysing the situation, a red cattle truck full of people from the North End of Tunttable drove past. We were a little more fortunate; we were soon packed into Paddy Wagons, but not taken far, only up to the ridge, part way to Nimbin, where everybody arrested was taken to first.

The police had entered the property at three points in forces of about twenty, and at each entry point had rounded up as many people in the vicinity as possible before the alarm spread. On the ridge overlooking the South End, on the road to Mt Nardi, the police had set up a command post to overlook the operation, process the arrestees, and have a barbeque at the same time.

While they finally took down names and ages, we were able to talk to people from other

parts of the property, and find out what had happened to them. Jerry B. told me they showed him a photocopied warrant. I hadn't seen one. The word went round later that the twelve-ounce stash was to be divided among us for the charges. I am unsure if this was where we were fingerprinted and photographed. Perhaps someone else who was there can remember that more clearly?

They seemed to reach "capacity" and then began the procedure for transporting us prisoners to Lismore lockup. We sang and joked in the back of the van, and laughed at the high comedy of some of the situations that had occurred with police in the course of the raid, like naked people fleeing into the bush, that sort of thing. I don't want to say too much, others can tell their story themselves.

Eventually, all 42 of us were bailed, released onto the street, and allowed to find our way home. In all, 43 had been arrested, but a young woman caring for a child was left behind at the North End, perhaps to keep the child out of the cattle truck used there, provided she came in later. It was the beginning of months of court appearances, big name

www.nimbinradio.com

Good old fashioned  
**HIPPIY BASHIN'**

See the re-enactment of the famous  
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30 years ago 60 police herded Hippies into a cattle truck on the 12th August '76 in the legendary Tunttable Falls bust. Commemorate the 30 year anniversary & re-live the action

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barristers, and newspaper coverage.

On the 29th August 1976, Queensland police raided Cedar Bay with the help of a naval vessel, and destroyed houses and rainwater tanks before taking those arrested to Cairns... Queensland police said they had conducted this raid in support of the NSW police.

Ultimately, all Tunttable drug charges were dropped, after the search warrant was successfully challenged. As I remember the grounds for the judgement were:

- A warrant to search Tunttable Falls community was the equivalent of a warrant to search a village or small suburb, which was not on. The warrant was not specific enough in the address to be searched.
- Photocopied warrants were not acceptable. The actual warrant had to be served.
- The warrant was to be served between sunrise and sunset, and was not served at that time, but before sunrise. The police seem to have

acted in ways that went beyond law enforcement, and showed us the depths of the intolerance some sections of the community felt towards us. Possibly we were naïve not to foresee this, but we never had any sense of being a threat to anyone with our land-sharing experiment. We were just a bunch of young people looking for a better place or way to live.

Sadly, there will always be some police who think the current laws and police powers are inadequate, and that they themselves are the true arbiters of the law as it should be. They are one of the very real dangers in police culture.

Alan William Huttley, known to most as Barney, one of the few names actually on the search warrant, and arrested in the same group as me, is no longer with us. I remember you Barney, and the good times we shared at Tunttable Falls.

Warwick Sibthorpe, (19yrs) Plumber and Joiner extraordinaire, was also arrested that day, is also no longer with us.

### Were YOU arrested in one of these raids?


In 1976, on August 12th, before dawn, about 60 fully armed police raided the Tunttable Falls Community, simultaneously serving photocopied warrants at the north end, centre, and south end of the 2000 acre property, rounding up as many people as possible, marching them up to the road, and transporting them by road, some in a cattle truck, to an identification area on the ridge above Tunttable.

On August 12th 2006, it will be thirty years since that infamous Tunttable Falls police raid. I was one of the Tunttable Falls 43. There must be other survivors of the Great '76 Raid.

It would be very much appreciated if survivors could write down their memories of that day, and contribute them to a collection that I would put on this website, with or without name, as you prefer... Survivors of the Cedar Bay Community Police Raid of August 29th, 1976, in Queensland, are also requested to send in their memory of that experience. Buildings were burned, and rainwater tanks punctured by gunshots....tell us more, please, if you were there. Survivors of the 1997 Wyalaliba Community Police Raid are also invited to contribute to a collection. There is not much information on the web, or in books, about these events. It would be good to remedy that.

Please forward your recollections to [hemp@nrq.com.au](mailto:hemp@nrq.com.au)

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# Celebrating 30 years of police overkill

By Neil Pike

## Scenario 1

A small, economically poor rural community is sleeping peacefully. Just before dawn, 60 heavily-armed and uniformed men burst into the various dwellings and wake the inhabitants at gunpoint. 42 people are rounded up and herded into a cattle-truck in which they are taken to the nearest large town, imprisoned and booked on a series of trumped-up charges. Germany-1936? Vietnam- 1972? No... Nimbin, Australia, 12th August, 1976.

The community in question was the newly-formed Tuntable Falls co-op, the largest so-called "hippy commune" in Australia. The charges were all marijuana-related and were all later thrown out of court. At the same time as this heavy-handed example of hippie-bashing, Australia was being flooded with heroin by a consortium of career criminals and corrupt NSW Police.

Nimbin at the time had no visible street trade in marijuana, the only drug commonly used there. Most of the new inhabitants had moved to this sleepy rural haven as part of a conscious decision to seek a healthier more sustainable lifestyle than that offered in contemporary society. Rightly or wrongly, these people were largely well-intentioned idealists... not criminals.

## Scenario 2

A small village is holding its yearly festival. Women, children, family groups, young and old are peacefully enjoying themselves. Music is playing. People are smiling and laughing. Flags, banners and balloons are waving in the sun-soaked breeze.

Suddenly a group of muscle-bound, armed men begin randomly grabbing people from the crowd, shouting at them, strip-searching them and physically intimidating anyone who resists. At either side of town, roadblocks have been set-up and visitors to the festival are being forced from their cars, strip-searched and harassed by dogs. Those not treated in this way are told to "go back where they came from" East Timor- 1998? Serbia-1995? Nah... just good ol' Nimbin again- Mardi Grass 2006. Some things just don't seem to change... or do they?

Thirty years after the "great Tuntable cattle-truck bust", Nimbin (and anyone who moved here post-1973) is still being used by the NSW Police as easy target practice. Heavy-handed, intimidating, one-sided, expensive (and usually relatively pointless) policing policies are a regular fact of life here.

In the '70s, this was somewhat understandable. The world at that time was still reverberating to many of the changes initiated in the '60s and many of the old-time residents

**"The real question is whether there was some over-kill"**

**NSW Premier  
Neville Wran, 1976**

here felt somehow threatened by the sudden invasion of hippies, hemp and head lice.

A few miles over the border, Joh Bjelke-Peterson was running a corrupt and brutal police state and hippies were treated as second class citizens. Concurrent with the Tuntable raid, North Queensland's Cedar Bay commune was also busted. Houses were burnt down, fruit trees chopped and the hippies were rounded up and chained to coconut trees.

Luckily for the Nimbin variety of hippie though, we had a more enlightened State Government at the time. The premier, Neville Wran had made an election commitment to decriminalise drug dependence, and was troubled by the Tuntable raid. As police minister he wondered why he hadn't been told about it beforehand and asked that an independent report of the incident be made. "The real question," he said, "is whether there was some over-kill." For this he was pilloried by the north coast establishment, police and press.

To the hippies, it seemed we were

being persecuted because of our lifestyle choices, and that our civil rights were seriously under threat. Eventually the government and the legal system agreed, but it was some years before the local "straight" establishment accepted this.

In the meantime the local press reported things in a very one-sided way (unlike their national counterparts). Police at the time said they "appreciated the level of reporting in the Northern Star". Small wonder when the Star failed to mention the cattle-truck, the shotguns and the photo-copied warrants but somehow managed to print an editorial and several letters praising the Police actions and howling for Neville Wran's blood.

As if to justify the raid, two days after the bust, the Star printed a large article about the "scientific facts" of Marijuana, including such priceless gems as pot being "occasionally injected". No doubt about it... quality journalism!

As time went on everything mellowed somewhat. The long-term locals generally came to accept the "new settlers" and "us hippies" in turn learnt to be less arrogant in our dealings with people we'd previously dismissed as "rednecks". Eventually most people learnt that there was good and bad in all social groupings. By the late '90s, a rather comfortable peace had settled over the north coast and policing policies seemed to reflect this.

As the 21st Century crashed down on us though, this all changed. As the War On Terror increasingly intersected with the War On Drugs

and civil liberties and personal freedom became more and more a thing of the past, we could be forgiven for thinking that we'd somehow stumbled into a bad 1970's cop show rerun. With a couple of major differences.

In the 70s, the cops appeared to have been acting on their own behalf or from a purely local pressure. These days though, the cops really are just doing what they're told. State and Federal policy has shifted so far to the right that a sleazy opportunist like Thomas George or a crazed '50s shopkeeper like Johnny Howard are the ones calling the shots... and we KNOW what they think of hippies.

In many ways, the erosion of civil liberties in a small hippie town like Nimbin is small potatoes compared with the nightmares being dealt out in freedom's name to the rest of the world. Still, wasn't there an old hippie cliché about "thinking globally and acting locally"?

I believe there's also an even older activists' one-liner that "it's better to die on your feet than to live on your knees" (as borrowed by Midnight Oil in the 80s). Surely it's time to at least try and stand up for our basic civil rights.

So in time-honoured hippie tradition, you are all invited to a peaceful "celebration of 30 years of Police over-kill" to be held in Nimbin on Saturday August 12th. Bring a smile, some courage, a joint (just kidding, officer) and a good sense of humour.

If nothing else, it's bound to be a crack-up. See you there.

## Asymmetric Policing How to discipline and punish an uncooperative or deviant community

by Simon Cass

Asymmetric policing occurs in a community when some laws are ruthlessly enforced while there is disregard for law and order issues that primarily concern that community.

The enforcement side utilises impersonal, hi-tech, invasive, isolating and mass policing techniques. The areas of disregard include vandalism, drunkenness, violence and earning and keeping the trust of a community.

This situation in Nimbin has developed over more than 30 years of conflict – spurred on by National Party politicians, developers, and police eager to make a name for themselves.

The end result is an almost complete breakdown of communication between community and police, and a community that generally fears police more than criminals.

A fine example of asymmetric policing was played out during the month preceding Mardi Grass 2006. Working business hours, about a dozen paramilitary-style police marched up and down the main street – searching people they deemed to be suspicious. After dark however, police were unavailable. One of the biggest benefits of asymmetric policing for the police is in the public relations and spin-doctor departments. Warwick Fry in his article "Policing

Nimbin" in *Nimbin GoodTimes* illustrates very well the practical applications of these divide and conquer tactics. By disregarding the most consistent community request: a couple of police to keep an eye on things at pub closing time and mounting highly intensive search operations, they split the community and play one side against the other in a classic case of wedge politics... Good spin, lousy policing.

Max Maxted has also detailed asymmetric policing in the *Nimbin Magazine*: "We do not need blue stingers swarming all over us in a simulated anti-terrorist exercise, and setting up roadblocks...over-policing their American inspired 'War on Drugs.' We need regular police here in the village after dark to buffer the trouble caused by

alcohol-fuelled revellers."

In August 1976, police loaded some 40 Tuntable hippies into vehicles and a cattle truck for the journey into Lismore to be charged with various drug offences; all charges were subsequently dropped. Thirty years on and little has changed, with 46 people picked up on minor drug offences during "Operation Grasstree" – which used road blocks and sniffer dogs (see story p 7). Overkill policing on both occasions produced minimal results. Between these two episodes, we have years of similar assaults on a small community nestled in rainforest hills. No other village in Australia has faced such concerted and collective harassment.

Community desires for safety, accountability, compassion, communication,

transparency and commitment to a just civil society have been met with the mechanics and politics of the new world order. Our desires for a secure and peaceful environment have been hijacked and we now have a main street lined with cameras and surveillance from anonymous "protectors."

Pity the cameras don't seem to work and have cost our community thousands of dollars that could have been spent on our local needs. Local voices need to clearly express opposition to this world – the Thomas Georges and "Bluey"

Lyons envisage a different Nimbin to the one in which we live.

Asymmetric policing is a politically motivated perversion of the law, a corruption of the basic principle that the law applies equally to everyone. The selective application of laws on targeted populations is a traditional weapon of authoritarian powers – a means to punish, discipline or change behaviour, and a clear violation of civil rights.

Are we going to stand up for our rights?



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# Nimbin Fashion Shows 2006



**F**irmly cemented as one of Nimbin's premier entertainment extravaganzas of the year, over 150 of Nimbin's talented designers, artists, musicians and models will be involved this year's fashion shows, which will be held at the Nimbin Town Hall on 17th and 18th November. Nimbin Fashion Shows co-ordinator David Hyett said, "It's now time for designers who are interested in participating in this year's shows to step forward and let us know so that we can begin to plan the format."

David expects that this year we will see a number of new entrants in the shows as there has been a lot of early interest from younger designers, so much so that they may have to put on a separate show just for the

youth.

Of the more experienced designers, new collections will be featured from Pol, Barbara Mills, Punkin and Christina Chester of CC Designs.

Christina recently celebrated the opening of her CC Designs fashion showroom at the Nimbin Bush Factory, with over 50 friends and fellow designers and models attending.

The showroom is the most recent step in Christina's stated desire to become an successful international designer.

Anyone interested in participating in the 2006 Nimbin Fashion shows in any capacity should contact David Hyett on 6689-0095, mobile 0418-824-598 or email [dave@bringabong.com](mailto:dave@bringabong.com).

# Danger Art Studio

Exhibiting exclusively the work of Maxx Maxted

**A**ccording to Maxx Maxted, most art is 'safe'. It meshes into the lacklustre fabric of life in the suburbs, it is the splash and dribble of mediocre minds casting a nebulous web of ideas at a canvas in the hope of landing a meaning, or at least matching the curtains.

But Maxx, who has called himself an artist for 50 years, has an antidote: Danger Art.

"Danger Art seeks to shake the viewer out of habitual sight into an appreciation of the vast sense of 'realities' possible when one opens up to the enlightenment that DANGER ART can impart, a sideways swipe at reality," Maxx said.

"Most of my work plays with the idea of visual, verbal and intellectual puns and attempting to 'make visible the invisible'. Puns open up the possibility of other realities. Double meanings tickle our funny bone and remind us to 'lighten up', and that the universe may not be running to our schedule, after all."

Maxx seems to work in phases. His last exhibition was titled 'Rebirth' at the Nimbin Regional Gallery and included a guided tour around the exhibition, which is available on DVD. He also has two books of short stories and a novel, not for the fainthearted, a stack of postcards of his paintings, plus a swag of prints and graphics.

"I have called myself an artist for 50 years. I like pushing buttons, but like most people, I don't like my own cage rattled too much, so I tend to confine my outrage to paint and canvas, or more usually as an A4 or A3 format graphic poster."

Danger Art studio is a working art space but is open to the public on weekends.

Maxx said, "I don't pay 40% commission to a dealer, so all



my prices are genuine factory prices, just the place for a quiet weekend drive for a visit and a chat."

"My wrists are beyond sculpture these days, apart from the occasional Buddha head carved from green concrete, but it doesn't stop me talking though. At present I seem to spend most of my time inventing musical instruments and playing blues with local band, Blue Mango."

You can find Danger Art studio at the corner of Anderson and Gungas Roads Nimbin. Phone 6689 0085 or email [maxxmaxted@yahoo.com.au](mailto:maxxmaxted@yahoo.com.au) Open weekends, but not for the fainthearted.

## Lights, stills, emotion!



A Young Women's Photography Exhibition  
Reflecting on healthy and unhealthy relationships  
A Liverpool Women's Health service and Green Valley Domestic Violence Service Project  
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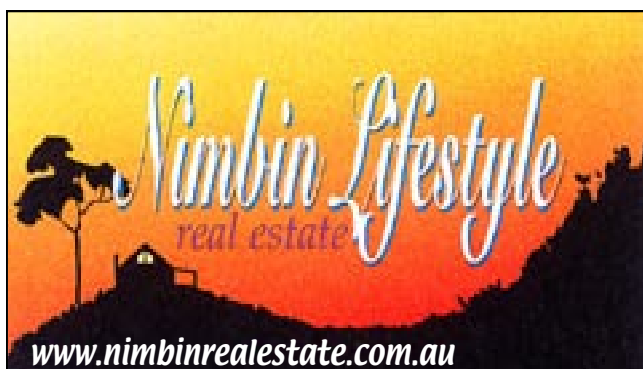
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# Pushing the Portrait

The voluptuous Dame Leonie, patron of the arts, and who has been likened to the Betty Churcher of Melbourne, opened Blue Knob Hall Gallery's latest exhibition 'Pushing the Portrait' on Friday 28th July.

The concept of pushing the portrait evokes the essence of person and/or place and the artists exhibiting at Blue Knob Hall Gallery have certainly taken the theme on in traditional style portraiture as well as in contemporary genres.

The works include a whimsical papier and cotton mache bust by Mac McMahan titled 'The Mayor of Nimbin'. Made from hundreds of tiny paper cut out faces, this work depicts the multi-faceted 'true face' of Nimbin.

Margie Rojo's acrylic on canvas 'The Frog and the Princess' evolved after an encounter between the artist and a frog – it is truly a tale of enchantment.

Anthea Moffatt's plaster, sticks and paint sculpture titled 'Girl with Bird' has a charming naïve quality, which embraces the concept of the show in a different way. Susanna Ofaelain has a number of stunning works including a mixed media portrait of well-known local artist Michael Taylor.

Other artists included in the show are Michelle McQuay with a larger



The Frog and the Princess by Margie Rojo



Dame Leonie, patron of the arts.

than life acrylic and oil on canvas portrait of 'Big Kev McQuay', Len Martin's digitally manipulated series of quirky self portrait prints, Graham Ferguson's oil on canvas 'Tucker and Me' as well as a bronze bust of himself.

See also Gordon Petherbridge's air-brushed portraits, Suellen



Title: Self portrait  
Artist: Shirley Miller  
Medium: Oil on canvas

Howarth's ceramics, Hayley Hillis' black and white photography, Seta Evanian's series of portraits on textured surfaces, Robin Moore's acrylic on canvas and more!

This exhibition will be showing until 28th August, so please come and enjoy the show, and after, relax and take in the wonderful views, food and ambience at our lovely Blue Knob Hall Café.

# The Fussy Gourmet's Review

by Celeste Oss-Emer

The Blue Knob Hall Café/Gallery is an exquisite dining experience. It is a rare and precious gem hidden in the Nimbin Valley near Lillian Rock and Blue Knob Mountain.

At night it sparkles like a jewel, the warmth of the fire invites, the ambience is amazing and you feel as though you've found gourmet treasure.

You are greeted by your hosts, Julie and Michelle, and seated in the verandah dining area, which is warm and glowing (protected from the winter weather). The Restaurant menu is a very special board which is changed weekly, and the selection is nothing short of a 5-star rating.

I heard some patrons mentioning that they used to have to travel for 1-2 hours for such service and quality, and now that they've found the Blue Knob Café Restaurant they are only driving for ten minutes, so they get to stay, relax and enjoy the amazing food and atmosphere. They have reserved a table for four at 6.30pm every Friday night!

Julie and Michelle are not only your hosts, but also amazingly talented chefs and waitresses. The entrees included mushrooms stuffed with ricotta and Pesto, spicy chickpea and lentil soup, cream of broccoli soup, seafood crepe with creamy prawn, fish and mussels, Haban cannelloni stuffed with



Your hosts, Julie and Michelle.

spinach and fetta.

Our table sampled all entrees and they were all superb. The main course was a culinary delight - you could choose between roast duck (from our local butcher), roast pork, or the vegetarian nutloaf, which was a highlight for me – being a fussy vego! All mains were served with roast veges and potato au gratin or stir-fry vegies.

We sipped sweet champagne with our entrée, had a beer while enjoying the view and lively conversation, had a lovely cab sav merlot with our mains, we were totally satisfied and blissed out, yet the dessert menu and coffee could not be ignored.

We had the divine sticky date pudding, crepe suzettes, baked lemon cheesecake, the chocolate pot, and the coffees, which made the perfect ending to an absolutely perfect evening!

# Nimbin's busy basket weavers

The Second Weave and Mend Festival  
September 29th, 30th, October 1st 2006  
Nimbin Central School grounds  
Wiyabal Country – Bundjalung Nation

This is a community based initiative focused on Weaving and Mending the fabric of our society through our jarjum – our children – thereby our future.

This is a hands-on skill-based festival. Artists/weavers can come together for three days, bringing their wares and sharing their skills, knowledge and techniques with children of our local regional and wider communities, each other and the general public.

This initiative is a collaborative project between Nimbin Wednesday Weavers, Nimbin Central School, Nimbin School of Arts, Nimbin Community School, Nimbin Acoustic Music Collective, and is organised by voluntary workers.

The Weave and Mend Festival has a theme song which was launched by local Nimbin musicians "Sisters in Lore" on the Winter Solstice. It will be played on local radio NimFM 102.3 for promotion of the Festival.

The aims of this Festival are to focus on:

- our jarjum – children – by hands-on introduction to the traditional craft of basketry;
- Earth Mother, utilising her resources (her

grasses and fibres) in a conscious way;

- Art as a way of mending the fabric of our community;
- Recycling material, fibres, minimising 'cost' to ourselves and Earth Mother;
- Collaboration and cooperation between all aspects of community for the sake of our children;
- Weaving acoustic music, song and dance throughout the Festival.

Artists will be demonstrating their skills throughout the 3 days (10am to 3pm) and will be asked to do a 2-hour workshop (Saturday or Sunday) for which they will be paid a fee \$5 per head.

## Performers Wanted

The Weave and Mend Festival is holding a performance night on Saturday 30th September from sunset on, and local musicians and travelling buskers are invited to participate. The theme of the evening, as with the rest of the Festival, is weaving and mending, healing the fabric of our society.

Buskers are also invited to play throughout the weekend at appropriate times. Please let us know if you have any particular requirements for your performance. For more information please call Raine, Musical Director, on 6689-1129 or 0427-336-910.

# News from Nimbin Artists Gallery

Our Autumn Arts Extravaganza was not only a huge success with over 10,000 visitors but also saw good sales.

The gallery group has decided to use that success to offer some subsidised exhibitions at Nimbin Regional Gallery (the rainbow building). If you wish to be considered for one of these, let us have details of your proposed exhibition and tell us how Nimbin would benefit from the exhibition.

New Artists are always welcome in the Gallery. The group has a meeting at 9 am every 4 to 6 weeks followed by a complete re-hang of the gallery. This meeting looks at the work of potential new exhibitors. If the artist is accepted, work may be included at

that day's hanging and/or future hangings.

All workers in the Gallery are volunteers and exhibiting artists are welcome to become Gallery Volunteers. There are jobs to do other than duty in the Gallery – do talk to us if you would like to help, whether regularly or occasionally.

## Materials for sale

We have card packs for \$10. They comprise 20 cards, envelopes & cellophane bags ready for you to create your own masterpieces to use or sell.

We also have D-rings, screws and picture wire at very reasonable prices to give your work a professional finish.

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# Building dunnies in Vietnam

by Stuart McConville

I've had the travel bug with its teeth firmly sunk into my flesh for many years and it finally got the better of me a couple of months ago. I remembered something from my childhood, a fascination with something called the Towers of Hanoi. I couldn't actually remember ever seeing pictures of these towers, just a vague recollection. So Hanoi it was!

I booked a ticket and started asking everyone about Vietnam and what was happening there. It turned out that Geoff Lawton (permaculture guru) had recently been over there working with a local organisation supporting indigenous farmers. I contacted him and he put me in touch with the Centre for Indigenous Research, Knowledge and Development (CIRD). They were very accommodating and embraced me as a colleague from day one. They were especially interested in my background as an on-site waste management consultant here in Australia.

After a week of touring around the north-west of Vietnam, I was ushered by train to the small town

of Dong Le, in the central highlands. Dong Le is a very poor rural town, with average annual incomes in the realm of \$150. The CIRD project centre is located there, on the outskirts of town. I was given an office and a bedroom and told that the next day I was to be giving lectures to groups of key farmers from local communes. Wow, they threw me in at the deep end. I was totally unprepared to be giving lectures, with no material on hand, and until very recently, very little idea of what it was I was going to be helping with.

I hastily put some material together and presented a couple of toilet system designs and a biogas generator. They were most impressed by the locally designed Clivus minimus dry composting toilet, one of which I have at home at Barkers Vale. So after the lecture I was informed that I would be overseeing the building of a Clivus on site at CIRD, and another at a remote village called Ban Ke. After some failed attempts to get a copy of the 'official' plans faxed from Australia, we began the first Vietnamese dry composting toilet, designed on the run, with a concept and some vague memories from building my own.

The Vietnamese get up early, around 5.30am. Breakfast, usually fish, greens and rice, is at 6. Then there is the tooth picking session, and then the tea drinking. This can last a while. We normally got around to actual work at around 8. About 11 we would knock off for more tea and a wash and beer before lunch. Then there is lunch, tooth picking, tea and a two hour break for a sleep, so normally, we'd be back working at around 2 - 2.30.

We'd normally knock off around 4.30 - 5, then drink more beer, so altogether we'd only get 5 - 6 hours a day in, at a fairly slow pace too, since all the bricks, sand and cement had to be lugged in by hand (about half a km) It was all very civilized I thought. Progress was made and the dunny started taking shape. Unfortunately I had to leave before it was completed, as I had another job to do in Ban Ke.

Ban Ke is a remote hill tribe village about 50 km from the Lao border in central Vietnam. The Malean people are an ethnic minority who have been swidden farming (slash and burn) here for centuries. They are traditionally foresters, cutting timber for sale to the

builders and tradesmen in the area. They have reached a point where there is very little timber left to cut, and most of what is left is in the upper catchment areas. These areas are essential to protect the water resource that keeps their rice paddies irrigated, and their drinking water flowing.

In the last five years, they have practiced permanent agriculture, growing peanuts as a cash crop. They are also beginning to establish fruit trees and permaculture gardens in the village. They are time rich and resource poor, so they are unable to afford simple things like fuel for the govt supplied rotary hoe, which sits rusting in a corner. After a quick assessment of the situation, it became obvious that there were no bricks here to build with, so I decided to re-design the clivus using sand sawdust cement as an in-fill for a stud frame structure. The village elders had never heard of this technique before and had some doubts, so we decided to build a demonstration sand sawdust cement wall to get them familiar with the technique. So the next day, we bought a bag of cement, and went over to the village to organise the frame. The builders went



to it with local hardwoods, joining the frame together painstakingly without the use of nails or screws. I left them to it and held a knot-tying workshop in the community house. I think they were very impressed by the knots, as no one there seemed to have even a basic knowledge of how to tie a knot that would hold, and come undone when needed.

We completed the frame that day, packing in a mixture of the local river sand, sawdust from the local supply, and cement. We laid the frame flat and packed it over a plastic sheet. As it was stinking hot, I headed down to the river for a swim after we finished. I'd waded across the river in the morning and thought that was the go, but didn't notice that the water had risen considerably since then. About halfway across, with fast flowing red brown water up to my waist, I was swept away over a set of rapids. I swam like hell to get to the bank, as I knew there was a really nasty set of rapids approaching fast. Letting go of my shirt, I managed to grab hold of an over hanging branch and hauled myself out just in the nick of time. When the locals heard my story they had a great laugh, and said I was very lucky, as many had drowned in the river.

That afternoon, we began clearing the site for the toilet, eventually completing the footings for the clivus the following day.

In the evening a big group of villagers came over to play music and drink. I had a didgeridu that I'd made in Dong Le and my Hang (steel drum) and we had a great night using music to break down the language barriers.

The following day we

returned to Dong Le for another couple of days on the clivus there, which was almost done by the time I got back. It had evolved a rear window, for inspection of the compost, something Mr Kum, my colleague had added as a personal touch.

Time for me to go back to Hanoi to find the towers. After asking everyone on my trip, still no one knew anything about these towers. I decided to use Google and the result astounded me. The Towers of Hanoi is a mathematical puzzle developed by a frenchman in the 1800's. He apparently copied the idea from a buddhist or hindu myth, which holds that there is a special sect of holy men somewhere in asia, maybe hanoi, who have six golden discs of concentric proportions that must be moved from the pillar they are on (they all have holes in the middle) to one of two other pillars and end up from largest on the base to smallest on the top. The rule, though, is that only one can be moved at a time, and no large disc can be placed on a smaller disc. Apparently the puzzle can only be solved if you know the sequence and you have a spare 580 billion years or so. When the monks put the last piece of the puzzle in place, it will be the end of the world. It all sounded like a plot from an Indiana Jones film to me. I guess my next trip will have to be "In search of the Towers of Hanoi"

Any one who is thinking of travelling and doing some volunteer work should consider Vietnam. I can put you in touch with CIRD. Call Stuart from Pooh Solutions on 6689 7496.

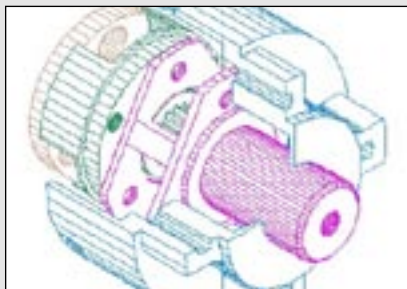
## Better design with CAD

by David Julian

CTC Nimbin is running a two-hour CAD workshop on 26th August at 11am, using Turbocad software, which is available as a free demo version. The cost is \$15.

Computer Aided Design (CAD), also known as Computer Assisted Drafting, has been around almost as long as computers themselves. Engineers have been using computers for many years to predict the properties of the structures they are designing. It is probably fair to say that many of the buildings and engineered structures we see in our world would simply not exist without CAD.

But it is not just the engineering marvels, the skyscrapers, the massive roads and bridges that benefit from CAD. More and more CAD is finding its way into the home. The humble



backyard shed, landscaped garden or home addition can all benefit from CAD.

The benefit of modern CAD software is that it allows the designer to see images of the structure during all stages of the design process. For the backyard builder this means that you can test different building materials, adapt sizes and shapes, and create structures that blend in with the surrounding landscape.

The power of CAD software is that it creates a three dimensional model of the design, allowing the user to rotate it

and view it looks from every angle. Some CAD software will allow you to simulate the path of the sun at different times of the year. This is essential to design a building that relies on passive heating and cooling. With this information it is possible to design a building that shields out the hot summer sun, but allows the winter sun to enter and warm the building.

The CTC Nimbin CAD workshop will offer a basic introduction to CAD drafting, including various ways of specifying coordinates, drawing lines, and curves, the use of layers, and editing options such as mirroring and arraying, and laying out the drawing for printing.

It will be useful for anyone designing a house, or anyone who likes technical drawing, designing, or inventing. No previous experience is needed, although basic computer skills are assumed.

Book at CTC Nimbin.

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# Nimbin community combines its creativity and resources to protect biodiversity

by Ian Browne

Many of us have heard of the World Heritage Listed Daintree Rainforest in the wet tropics of Far North Queensland. Some folk have even been blessedly intimate with this carnival of tangling triffid delight.

Why yes, it's the only ecosystem on the planet that has a representative of each of the ancient Gondwanan Angiosperm families, the richest assemblage of ancient flowering plants on earth. Wet season summer rains descend between December and March as the trade winds and monsoon entice social chaos, to do battle in the heavens above a landscape broiling in a sickly indulgence of biodiversity.

This ancient jungle spawning dynasty whispers the secrets of Gondwanaland, and the festive, sacred corroborees of the local indigenous tribes such as the coastal lowland, 'or Tjapanbara people', including the Gugu-Yulanji; home from Cape Tribulation to the Bloomfield River. My favorite bird, the mysterious, striking and at times excitingly intimidating southern cassowary, stalks the dappled underworld of these most proud and elegant of rainforests.

There are more than 14 types of rainforests in Northern Queensland, varying in species composition due to altitude, distance from the ocean and levels of deciduous microphyll vine thicket and evergreen mesophyll variation. Yet back in 1995 I was researching how private landowners in this ancient World Heritage Listed Rainforest were scarring hilltop vantage points and forest areas to lay their foundations, allowing their 'walking jaw' dogs and necessity cars to dispel from life my majestically adored cassowary.

These thriving forests of great antiquity survived the onslaught of the Pleistocene ice ages, El Nino drought, destructive Pacific-born cyclones, only to be brought



**Southern Cassowary.**

Photo Dan Blunt courtesy gondwanaguides.com.au

**Social Change:  
"fragmentation in  
the outside world is  
a reflection of the  
fragmentation of the  
inner self!"**

before the high court madness of contemporary human mismanagement, the lunacy of recent days, where the land is seen by some as a realm in which to pillage, abuse and degrade. What? We can't effectively save, protect and nurture one hugely significant global ecosystem, splendidly important in endemic rarity, on only one thousandth of the landmass of uniquely beautiful Australia?

The protection of Aboriginal heritage sites and improved bipartisan management, including complete indigenous access to sites needs undertaking. Aboriginal people here still identify strongly as being 'Rainforest People', and under the Native Title Act (1993); Indigenous ownership from 80-98% of claimants is a possible reality. Yet the full implication of what adheres to native title rights and Aboriginal interests remains unclear. However, it's a start and a further feather in the loyal cap for Eddy Mabo's well-striven cause.

With estimates placing endemic rainforest species extinction rates as high as a possible 50% in the tropics due to global climate change it seems only fitting that we might need to forecast changes and dynamic variations in climate change and localized

weather patterns. Does the rainforest ecosystem place increased energy in organic matter breakdown only to dispel its emissions to the atmosphere and reject recycling it locally as organic carbon growth in living trees for example? More research is needed to better understand the rainforest atmospheric interactions, the dynamics of vegetation growth patterns in relation to rainforest microclimates. Let's improve and increase the research of key species and single species importance in the ecological functioning within and between populations of animals and plants. We still lack clarity in a beneficial understanding of genetic variation, adaptive mutation under pressure, biographic and demographic rainforest community history. Where, what and how do they do all this under these conditions?

## Planting trees is for the birds!

There is the dire need to improve our innate understanding how the rainforest functions, how the ecosystem interrelates between all properties of life.

Thankfully, there is some wonderful scientific research emerging in the Wet Tropics of Far Northern Queensland and desperately important forest restoration progress also. Connecting once isolated rainforests patches with even young plantations is a windfall for native fruit eating birds, increasing riparian rainforest zones and helping diversify remnant patches, even within a three-year period. Of course Rainforests Rescue Pty Ltd have an interest in protecting the Atherton Tablelands also and by buying back land in the Daintree we are effectively increasing habitat with links to all regions within the Wet Tropics and facilitating the needs of migratory birds from Papua New Guinea and South East Asia.

Forget about bureaucracy and social neglect, we must all work together and do this happily, with pride and care.

It is time to nurture what we have left and increase and embrace sustainability in this region of the world. We can and are doing it, jump aboard Mother Earth my friend. It is time to love; the earth is shrinking in natural biodiverse habitat. Human populations are ever increasing but we can protect and love these regions and not just here but also in Ecuador where Rainforest Rescue is waving the olive branch of peace also. Land can

be purchased with your help; it costs very little to nurture.

I for one am poor in capital wealth; but rich in desire and love for these ecosystems. And this includes my volcanic homeland subtropical rainforests in Northern NSW; where the fig tree not only stands solitary in the farm paddock; but where too the Big Scrub whispers secret knowledge under the loyal loving gaze of mighty Wollumbin; in the land of the

Bundjalung.

Do you know how it feels to be spiritually engaged and touched by biodiversity and tranquility? Then you must feel satisfied in knowing that the ever respected and admired David Suzuki also cares for the Daintree Rainforest, championing his well-healed word-'our word', the most important word, "LIFE".

Ian Browne's email is [etshamrock2@hotmail.com](mailto:etshamrock2@hotmail.com).

## My Dwarf Sugar Palm

by David McMinn

My Dwarf Sugar Palm (*Arenga engleri*) is a very attractive, medium sized clumping palm. The dwarf in its common name is misleading, as it can reach 3m to 4m in height with a spread of 5m and thus it is definitely not dwarf. My plant was propagated from seed received 25 years ago from the Sydney Botanic Gardens. It is native to Taiwan and the islands of southern Japan and thus some sources give it a common name of Taiwan sugar palm. It is the cold hardiest of the *Arenga* species being able to survive temperatures of about -4 oC. If you live in a frost pocket, plant the palm under the protection of a good tree canopy. The plants thrive on well drained soils, plenty of water, high nitrogen fertilisers and a warm frost free site. They do best in semi shade, but may also do well in full Sun if protected from the worst of the westerly summer heat. Young plants must always be grown in shady situations.

Being monocarpic, an *Arenga* palm stalk grows to its full height and then progressively flowers down the trunk over several years and then dies. With single stemmed *Arenga* species, this means the death of the palm. Fortunately, Dwarf Sugar Palms have multistems and thus new stems will emerge from the base to replace any that die and rot away. The orange flowers have an intense sweet fragrance and are much appreciated by the bees. The bright red, caustic fruit can cause allergic reactions, should be handled with gloves and NEVER EATEN.

Male and female flowers are on the same plant, so a single specimen will produce fruit and fertile seed. The black seed must be planted when fresh (4 to 6 weeks old) to achieve the best propagation success. Seed germination varies, with some plants emerging after a few months, while others may take up to two years. The palm may also be propagated by division and removal of the suckers, although this can be difficult and the new plants are slow to re-establish.

In Asia, the flower stalks of various *Arenga* species are often cut and the sugary sap



drained to make palm sugar and an alcoholic drink. The fibres around the trunk were also used to make a tough rope, before the introduction of synthetic fibres. In Australia, Dwarf Sugar Palms are occasionally grown for their horticultural appeal, as they make impressive and unique specimen plants. Floridata.com described this species as radiating "a tropical beauty and is considered to be among the finest landscape and cultivated palms."

The weed status of Dwarf Sugar Palm is unknown, but from my limited experience it is unlikely to become invasive. However, some palm species are weedy in our area - most notably the Cocos Palm (*Arecastrum romanzoffianum*), the Bamboo Palm (*Chamaedorea microspadix*) and various Phoenix species.

There are several other cultivated *Arenga* species. I have two Sugar Palms (*Arenga pinnata*), which can grow to 20m in height, with a trunk diameter of 60cm and leaves up to 10m in length. The growth of my plants has been very slow and they probably would have done better in the warmth of the tropics. I also have a few plants of the miniature *Arenga caudata*, a small dainty understory palm growing to one metre in height.

Roy the palm man has Dwarf Sugar Palms for sale every now and then.

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# ASTROLOGICAL TRENDS FOR AUGUST 2006



by Bev Murray - Insight Astrology

## BIRTHDAY - Leo

Leo individuals are generous, warm-hearted and creative! Their enthusiasm can sometimes be a bit overwhelming and they can present as being bossy and patronizing, however! The truth is that they are the most faithful and loving ones of the Zodiac and all they really desire is to express themselves creatively no matter what they are doing!

Give them: Gold jewelry, an opportunity to be the star of the party, a good massage (because they are vulnerable to back ache), ambience i.e. good food, wine, setting, music!!

## What August holds...

**Leo:** August begins with some hefty family issues arising, breathe deeply and avoid harsh self-criticism. The Aquarius Full moon on the 9th provides good relationship energy and some positive work related happenings. Emotions can be a bit tense so watch this however.

**Virgo:** This will be a month of personal achievement. Opportunities to improve your career path or take short journeys abound. The Virgo new moon on the 24th can be a bit all over the place but not to worry because from the 29th your birthday month will be full of good happenings!

**Libra:** The heart rules this month! Even big expenses that are heart-felt will pay you back three-fold this month. There is enough social pleasure and positive friend-related activity to make this an enjoyable phase overall. The 17th is a particularly advantageous day.

**Scorpio:** This is a busy and forward moving month for most Scorpio's. Don't fall into the trap of thinking it is all too hard and avoiding the commitment to work! Once you begin you will be surprised at the help and support that exists for you out there!

**Sagittarius:** The second can be a difficult way to start this month with a Jupiter/sun square. It is best to let it all go and relax until the 7th when things start to get better for you! The end of the month, around the New Moon begins a new and positive career cycle for you.

**Capricorn:** Commitment and loyalty are your strengths this month and others will be relying on this. Career is looking good and much gain come of the extra responsibilities loaded upon you this month. The 15th-20th are very strong days with some financial positives.

**Aquarius:** The Full Moon is in your sign this month and showers you with success and harmony! Insight into previously difficult areas for you is also available! Be expansive and the changes that occur will bring wonderful rewards into your life for the next 12 months.

**Pisces:** August increases your sensitivity. The 11th has a difficult opposition between Neptune and the Sun, which can bring up old issues. Its tempting to just use that old escapist trick of yours but it won't fix anything, time to own up and let go positively! The New moon on the 24th is strengthening.

**Aries:** The first two weeks of August are best used in tidying up financial deals and consolidating what you have. It is also a great month for re-establishing exercise regimes and focusing upon health related issues. Some good results will come of this! Prepare for a surprise!

**Taurus:** A small crisis early on this month can have its beginnings earlier this year. Diplomacy is the best policy for dealing with this. The New moon heralds some positive romantic encounters but the 29th and 28th can effect some unpleasant ego clashes. Tread lightly!

**Gemini:** A much better month than the last! People will respond to your suggestions with enthusiasm and old issues can be promptly resolved. The career sector is booming and you are feeling energetically able to accomplish just about anything! However, you still need to remember to rest!

**Cancer:** Financial issues dominate August. You are ready to really get this side of your life in order! Small, easily realized goals are favoured now and you can accomplish much by a practical approach. Love and business can overlap nicely this month!

Email Bev: [insightbevmurray@yahoo.com](mailto:insightbevmurray@yahoo.com)

# The leadership debate

## The Goddess

Greetings mortals. Democracy revolves around a process called voting and is one of the ways humans have devised for choosing their leaders. Voting centralises power so once voted in it's far easier for the real powers that be to manipulate our elected leaders. It doesn't really matter whether it's Howard or Costello, Beasley or Gillard, they will, all of them, toe their masters' line once the voters have granted them power. That's why we have religion; it's the only way to beat the corrupt politicians and their paymasters. Since our political party, the Hemp Party has been dissolved, our religion, the Church of the Holy Smoke, is our sole means of influencing destiny.

True power, it seems, comes not from the barrel of a gun but in the form of religious belief, as we discovered from the debate as to whether Gerald is the Goddess. And what a debate it was!

They say the victor writes the history so let me tell you what happened at the debate.

Due to adverse celestial circumstance my team comprised of only the Gerald and myself and, as Gerald vacates the premises when I'm about, he was about as useful as underpants at a nudist forum.

Matters of the heart forced miss P. the beautiful dominatrix from fronting on my behalf, while Bobert Bobalong was held up at customs in Coolangatta airport for a cavity search (at his own request, he'd misplaced his car keys) so he didn't arrive until the holy blood was being mopped up. Was it a fix, a conspiracy? We'll probably never know.

The debate got off to a shaky start when I explained to those present that of course Gerald wasn't the Goddess. I'm the Goddess and Gerald is just my foolish tool.

Lynne Oldfield responded for the opposition explaining that a woman, never mind



right back at you girl. General agreement was that I was the Goddess even though most of those in attendance wished I wasn't.

A question and answer session followed which I answered to the best of my ability but, quite frankly, most questions were of an intellectual nature and went right over my head.

a Goddess, wouldn't use aggression as I do in my written word. I guess she forgot that a few years ago she beat up Gerald over an access dispute, though I must admit she beat him up pretty non-aggressively.

Sky then asked me to desist from calling myself the Goddess as it showed a lack of respect for women. What can I say, she nailed my respectlessness in one.


Finally Marie had her turn and pointed out that I, the Goddess, was responsible for Nimbin's persecution by the police and various politicians, our high rate of hermaphroditism in the local crop and rain during harvest time. Marie finished off with a curse upon Gerald and myself. Thanks Marie, Gerald deserves your curse no doubt but cursing deities is futile and bad karma, so,

The big news of the evening however came from Cath Greenwood regarding our church's legitimacy. To be an official church it turns out, we need to send the names of 600 church members to the electoral commission. So sign up in the big black book at the Hemp Bar and help make us legit

Finally, we can put the question of my sacred nature to rest; I are the Goddess of our church and furthermore I promise to take the fight up to the corrupt politicians who make our sacred herb a felon.

And remember my friends, fill in your census form as a member of the COTHolic Church (the 's' is silent) and help keep the faith, it's a whole lot more practical than voting.


Blessings from the (legit) Goddess.



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