



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

PEACEFUL and FREE!

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North Coast activists at heart of peace protest

by Gail M Clarke

This past two weeks Australia has hosted the largest ever joint military exercise, involving 20,000 US personnel and over 15,000 Australian. Not to mention the hundreds of Queensland police special squad that were there to protect the power and might of this incredible force from all of us - peace activists.

We arrived at Yeppoon early in the week and were surprised at the number of North Coast folk who had taken the time and effort to be there: Benny Zable, Graham Dunstan, Michael Chai, Judy Hale, Cat Anderson, Brenda and Dougie the bus driver, just to name a few. It definitely made it easier to live in the harsh cold, wet and windy conditions with the family nearby, feeding us, providing support, warm teas, chai, and laughter.

An embassy and information centre had been set up in Yeppoon, and each



"It is absolutely astonishing to me that today, knowing the state of the planet's oceans and the importance of nature, that we would still use an area like Shoalwater Bay to carry out an exercise that endangers it... I am with you in trying to stop this madness." - Dr David Suzuki

morning would start with a group meeting to discuss issues from the previous day, future plans of actions and who would go where, what buses were leaving when and where, sometimes chaos reigned and yet out of the chaos came solidarity for the group.

As the week progressed more people arrived with fresh ideas, actions became more focused on arrests, as

that is what was needed to grab any headlines in the mainstream media. To get the message out to the wider public who live in ignorance of what is happening in their own backyard was not an easy task, but many stood up to the challenge.

People were prepared to walk on site, including a 69 year old peace activist- June, who managed to remain undetected for over 4 days

with a crew of younger people. Over 20 people were arrested and charged for trespassing or public nuisance, all were treated well by the arresting officers

One couple was arrested and charged with being a public nuisance in their naked protest of Make Love Not War at the Bifield Gate on Sunday. At the same time hundreds of people were gathering for a Rally and

march through the main streets of Yeppoon.

Organiser Steve Bishopric of SWAG said he was overjoyed at the response by locals supporting the Peace Convergence and learning more about the dangers of this US-Australia military exercise happening on their doorstep. He estimated 60% of the people who attended the Rally were concerned locals.

A full week of various actions and informative sessions were organised. Some that really affected many people were the photo exhibition, *Children of the Gulf War*, films especially *Ground Truth* and talks by many informed participants including indigenous women from Guam, Hawai'i and local Darumbal women.

We could fill pages with what we witnessed, the stories we heard and shared. Adrienne recorded over 30 hours of interviews and discussions, Omega filmed continuously and I became a Police Liaison Officer (?). In the near future we plan on sharing our insights with a film, slide and photo exhibition night.

The need to share this information and educate people to what our elected Government (Little Johnnie) is dragging the Australian people into, is imperative. If you are interested in finding out more, start with <www.peaceconvergence.com>



Powerful. With Benny Zable's installation are founder Peter Pedals (seated), and past directors (left to right) Shandor von Kontz, Martha Paitson, Nigel Morris and Cerli McLaughlin.

Powering change since 1987

The Rainbow Power Company celebrated its 20th year in business with an enjoyable party, complete with birthday cake.

The celebration, held at their expanding premises at 1 Alternative Way, Nimbin on Saturday 30th June, attracted scores of well-wishers to an afternoon of Nimbin Demons' steak sandwiches and beer, or Mordang's vege curry and java in the Rainbow Chai tent, as preferred. Musical entertainment was provided by Daddy Cool, George Scott, and the RPC staff jammers themselves, well into the evening around the bonfire.

During the formal speeches, founder Peter Pedals said, "We've been talking about global warming since the 70's. Now governments are catching up, with today the best solar rebate we've ever seen."

Peter spoke of the challenges that remain. "Currently the world is consuming 15 terawatts of power, constantly. We can reduce that dramatically, and supply much more of it

from renewable energy sources."

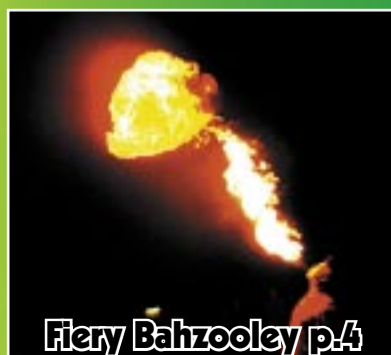
He spoke of obtaining baseload power supply from solar concentrators, which superheat steam to continue turning turbines at night, and "hot rocks" geothermal technology. "We need to be setting up renewable supply now, for the increasing likelihood of coal-fired power stations having to close down in summer due to water shortages," he said.

Peter was adamant that nuclear was not a viable, safe option. "I think uranium mining is something we've got to stop doing altogether," he said, quoting David Bradbury's figures (in his film *Hard Rain*) of 4 billion tonnes of nuclear waste being generated by the Olympic Dam mine alone.

Despite the work still needing to be done to secure a renewable future, current director Greg Clitheroe concluded, "I suggest we give ourselves a little clap for having changed the world."



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