



Koala Kolumn

Getting Kreative with Koalas

(and other Aussie Wildlife)

by Sonya Nourse

School holidays are well underway and I'm imagining that many of you will be looking for some creative ideas to inspire and absorb children of all ages.

My family have been visiting from overseas and the kids have really been enjoying their holiday here in Australia. We have found the library and the internet two of the most wonderful resources for ideas. They are also fabulous interactive and educational tools for most activities. Here are our 'top five picks' for native animals and environment-based DIY entertainment.

• Using native animals as subjects for origami, designing a native animal 'snakes and ladders' game and cooking up a feast of animal shaped bikkies.

• Writing a poem about our favourite wildlife critter, especially after a bushwalk or a visit to a native animal/environment centre or even an animal park. There are plenty to visit in our region and we are wonderfully spoilt for choice. There are also some great websites for children to submit their poems and also to view those that other children have created.

• Spending the day creating dress-ups is always fun. Kids can pretend to be their favourite wildlife critter and it doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming. Just provide some cut out cardboard faces, coloured pencils, paints or textas and add elastic at the end to create a colourful mask. Throw in some large pieces of coloured fabric or towels and a few big cardboard boxes and they will keep going for hours.

• Assembling beautifully designed jigsaw puzzles featuring a wide range of native animals in gorgeous natural settings. We have been amazed at the quality available and wide range of age-groups catered for.

• Creating a personalised greeting card for friends and families that reflects our fabulous Australian animals and our native bush is something older kids really go for. There are some great electronic card sites on the web that are free and use Aussie wildlife such as kangaroos, koalas, frogs and in beautiful



Looks can be deceiving

This case study illustrates the dilemma of healthy-looking but diseased koalas

Spyder is a juvenile koala. He was found on the ground covered in blood. The person who picked him up thought he had been bit by a car but close inspection showed the blood was coming from the tick bites all over him. Tests showed his blood was so thin and anaemic it would not clot and he should have been dead.

Spyder's prognosis during his first week in care was grave. However with a supportive diet and appropriate treatments he has recovered and is much improved. It is possible he has a blood parasite that has recently been discovered in koalas from the Northern Rivers by the Australian Wildlife Hospital vet team.

Continuing checks will be carried out on his blood to monitor its status. Spyder's release back to the wild is by no means certain.

natural Australian bush settings. Many also have the option of designing and creating your own unique card as well.

One of the websites that I have really enjoyed is www.gokids.com.au. This site is designed for everyone - parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, carers and everyone in between. It has a fantastic choice of Australian native animal crosswords, puzzles and jokes, fact sheets for projects, colouring-in pictures (all can be downloaded) plus competitions and great hands on activities like creating your own echidna. It is designed for children from preschool to lower high school and will most likely supply you with creative ideas for the entire holidays.

Finally, we recommend a visit to the Koala Care Centre in Rifle Range Road, East Lismore. Situated on the perimeter of Southern Cross University's Lismore campus, there is opportunity to observe free-ranging koalas as well as those in care.

Tours are at 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday and at 10am on Saturday. Bookings are essential because tour groups are kept small so as not to unnecessarily disturb the animals.

Information about koalas, their food trees and Friends of the Koala is available at: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone Friends of the Koala's (24/7) rescue hotline on 6622 1233.

Visit the Kids for Koalas section on the website. We'd love to display your koala drawings, poems and other koala activities in the electronic gallery, so get creative and most importantly have fun over the holidays.

Until next time, happy koala spotting!



Koala drawings by Mallory (above) and Ruby, both 10.



Australia screws the planet

By Michael Bloch
Green Living Tips.com

"I dare you to jump"
"I double dare you"
"I'll jump if you jump"
"You go first"
"Let's just skip a bit instead and go home"
"OK".

This basically sums up the much-awaited 800 page carbon reduction white paper released by the Australian Government in December. After many environmental groups had pushed for greenhouse gas reductions of 40% by 2020 and some sectors such as the filthy... I mean clean...I mean "low emissions" coal industry of course lobbied for far, far less, the verdict is in.

Australia is the biggest carbon polluter in the developed world on a per capita basis and bearing that in mind, the Australian Government has settled on an incredibly pathetic carbon emission reduction commitment of between 5% and 15% by 2020.

It gets worse - there's some further fine print.

The 5% reduction of 2000 levels by 2020 is unconditional, and, well, pathetic. We may as all buy Hummers for all the good that will do. 5%, even if implemented globally, will not take us below the 350ppm which is needed to bring us back to a "safe" level.

The 15% reduction *might* only happen if all other developed countries agree to at least the same amount. Even at 15%, it's well below what many environmentalists and scientists believe is necessary to avert disastrous climate change.

And guess what? The coal industry is, according to the government, here for the long term due to the wondrous, all singing, all dancing, miraculous prospect of low emissions coal. Who possibly could have seen that coming?

What isn't mentioned is that to create this "low emissions coal" through processes such as Carbon

Capture and Sequestration (CCS) takes around 25% more.. coal.

It's the perfect crime; yes, we can have low emissions coal, but we'll need more of it - more investment in mining, more export dollars for Australia, but therefore also more environmental degradation from other angles. The coal industry will be laughing all the way to the bank.

While there were many often somewhat vague references to renewable energy and a few bones thrown in relation to the local renewable, the 800 page white paper only mentioned the word "solar" once and the word "wind" 0 times. Yes, I checked. No word on lifting the means test on solar rebates *** and absolutely nothing on a nationalised gross feed in tariff scheme.

These two strategies alone could have really kicked off a major solar revolution in this country.

I still firmly believe that governments hate the idea of giving individuals more energy independence as that erodes the power of governments and it doesn't serve the interests of big business - and businesses run countries.

The only bright spots in the white paper were the fast tracking of \$500 million for renewable energy projects (details still sketchy - but it doesn't look like there's much there for small scale/home owner installations), support for consumers, business and community groups for adapting to the transition where carbon has a cost, plus a generous commitment to helping us all get a little more energy efficient. After all, the most environmentally friendly watt of electricity is the one you don't have to create.

Regardless, Australians who voted the Rudd government in primarily on its climate change stance will likely be very, very disappointed tonight. We had a chance to be the one who jumps the highest, to show the world that we had really, really big

environmental cojones, but it seems our eco-testes have disappeared as if they were suddenly exposed to sub-zero temperatures; which is something we'll see less of in these parts as climate change really sets in.

Thanks Kev, Penny, Peter and crew. Like Howard before you in regards to Iraq, you have ignored the will of the people. Democracy lay bleeding in the gutter before you took power, you've just kicked it in its broken ribs.

I'm sure your masters (the coal industry and the like) are well pleased with your efforts. Sleep well, secure in the knowledge that if everyone decides to follow Australia's pathetic lead of a 5% reduction commitment, you have blazed the trail for assisting all of us in totally and utterly screwing the planet.

*Update: On December 17, 2 days after the release of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme white paper, Minister for the Environment Peter Garrett announced the new "solar credits" program for new solar power, wind energy and hydro systems up to 1.5 kilowatts.

Set to kick in from July 1, 2009; the program effectively removes the means test and will be available to everyone - home owner, businesses and community groups. The solar credits program will use a RECs multiplier system and represents equivalent savings of up to \$7,500 on a renewable energy system

Given the importance and impact of this program, it's curious that it wasn't mentioned at all in the white paper. While the solar credits program will certainly allow more people to install renewable energy systems, Australian Greens Senator Christine Milne views the program with suspicion, stating that "each megawatt hour of solar power will take up the space of five megawatt hours in the scheme means the 20% target will now deliver even less renewable energy into the grid than it should."

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Emerald green fuel, anyone?

By Sue Stock

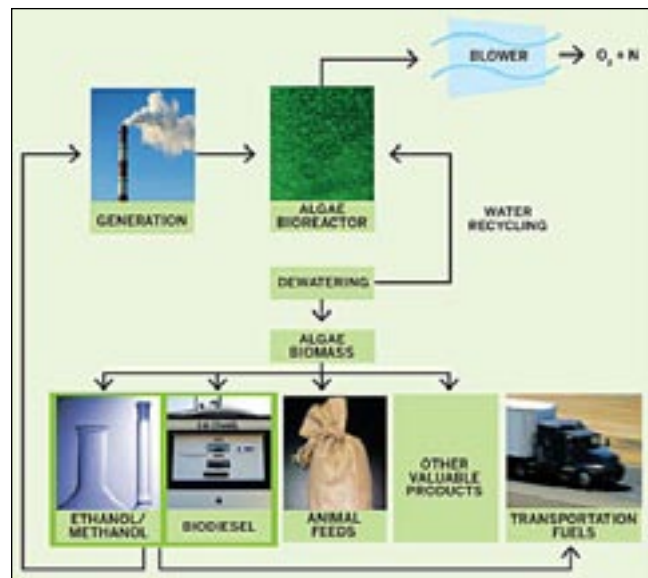
Australia is the biggest carbon polluter in the developed world on a per capita basis and yet, the Australian Government has settled on a miserably inadequate carbon emission reduction commitment of between 5% and 15% by 2020. I think this is a pitiful response by the ALP and no better than what we could have seen under Howard.

Yet there is some brighter news on the horizon. There is an exciting new biofuel that is attracting a lot of research money around the world at the moment, despite the recession. It is the growing of green algae as a biofuel and it may have a huge potential in combatting global warming and our rising carbon emissions as well as reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, which make up about 25 per cent of our emissions. It can also significantly help with wastewater treatment and reduce CO₂ emissions from coal-fired power stations. This is the growing of green algae as a biofuel.

Biofuels are solid, liquid or gas fuels derived from recently dead biological material and are distinguished from fossil fuels, which are derived from long dead biological material. Significantly when it is burned, algae fuel only releases into the air the carbon dioxide absorbed by the algae during its growth, making the whole process carbon neutral. This is unlike fossil fuels, which return carbon that was stored beneath the surface for millions of years, back into the atmosphere.

So, the most significant aspect of this biofuel is that it is carbon neutral while also having the potential of soaking up CO₂, as one of its raw materials, from powerstations and other CO₂ intensive industries like cement-making

Biofuel algae produces an emerald-green crude oil, produced by photosynthesis which can fuel cars, trucks and aircraft, without producing CO₂ emissions and without using crops that could be used for food, or using crops like palm oil, that have led to



extensive clearing of tropical rainforest and habitat in Borneo, particularly.

This second generation biofuel, as it is known, does not need prime agricultural land. It could be a technology that can be utilized in developing countries too and help to reduce poverty. Algae fuel is a liquid fuel that is chemically identical to crude oil. Algae are the world's most abundant form of plant life and via photosynthesis are extremely efficient at using sunlight and carbon dioxide to make organic material such as sugars, proteins and oils. Algal fuels do not impact fresh water resources, and they can use salty ocean water and wastewater from sewage after being processed by bacteria.

In October, 2008, the US company, *GreenFuel Technologies* announced the second phase of their joint project to develop algae farming technologies in Spain. The project, at a cement plant, is to demonstrate that industrial CO₂ emissions can be economically recycled to grow algae for use in high-value feeds, foods and fuel.

The *Carbon Trust* in the UK, also announced in 2008, that it wants to make algal biofuels a commercial reality by 2020. It is spending over 50 million dollars to further research and develop the technology.

Mark Williamson, innovations director at the *Carbon Trust*, said: "We must find a cost-effective and sustainable alternative to oil for our cars and planes if we are to deliver the deep cuts in carbon emissions necessary to tackle climate change. Algae could

provide a significant part of the answer and represents a multibillion-pound opportunity."

Biofuel algae have industrial ecology possibilities. It can significantly help with waste water treatment and can reduce CO₂ emissions from power stations, especially coal-fired power plants' flue gas which contains about ten to thirty times as much CO₂ as normal air. Economies of scale can be realised if it is incorporated into eco-industrial parks like Kalendorf in Denmark, – industrial symbiosis in practice, where all projects are environmentally and financially sustainable and where, importantly, the waste products from one industry become the resources for another.

In 2006, in Australia, the *Victor Smorgon Group (VSG)* has signed a licence agreement with *GreenFuel Technologies* to distribute, install and operate patented bioreactors and is conducting on-site assessments in Melbourne. The director of VSG, Peter Edwards said "The beauty of the *GreenFuel* bioreactor is that it can be retrofitted to existing smokestacks, such as those at coal-fired power stations, at relatively low cost and with minimal disruption. The micro-algae lock up the carbon in their cells and these can be harvested from the bioreactors and their lipids, proteins and carbohydrates then converted into biodiesel, ethanol, methane or other useful products, using conventional methods."

It has been found that algae need to have CO₂ in

large quantities in the ponds or bioreactors where they grow. In the US, *GreenFuel Technologies Corporation* in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), have demonstrated a reduction in CO₂ emissions by 82 % on sunny days and 50% on cloudy days (during daytime) and has cut nitrogen oxides by 85 percent (on a 24-hour basis) using their bioreactors with micro algae

One advantage of the technology is that it does not raise costs for power generators or electricity consumers. Whereas processes such as geosequestration are expected to cost about \$80 per tonne of carbon dioxide buried in the earth, micro-algae sequestration is a profitable business in itself.

The CSIRO now says that by 2015, biodiesel from algae may be available at near the current cost of oil-based diesel. The fuel would be initially taken up as a 20 % blend with oil-based diesel so that it can be used in the current vehicle stock. However, its use in higher blends is also favoured, after sufficient time to build up the stock of vehicles capable of using a high blend biodiesel.

Nicholas Stern the UK economist said last year "The next few years present a great opportunity to lay the foundations for a new form of growth. Let us grow out of this recession in a way that both reduces the risks for this planet and sparks off a new wave of investment which will create a more secure cleaner and more attractive economy for us all."

NSW needs to get on board this exciting new development of algae biofuel and set up a facility adjacent to one of our coal-fired powerstations. We need to fast-track this research and sell it or give it to India and China.

• On Dec. 30, 2008 Air New Zealand successfully completed a test flight from Auckland using a 50/50 mixture of jatropha oil (biofuel) and Jet A1 in one of the four Rolls Royce RB211 engines of a 747 jumbo jet.

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ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS FROM WWW.GRIST.ORG

You Lose Some

Most of Obama's environmental nominees praised by greens

US president elect Barack Obama last week officially announced his major environment-related nominations. Most got positive reviews from the green community, but there were some notable exceptions.

Enviros have given thumbs-up to Carol Browner as chief climate and energy adviser and Nancy Sutley as chair of the Council on Environmental Quality. Lisa Jackson, tapped to lead the U.S. EPA, has gotten praise from many, but also some criticism. Hilda Solis, nominated as labor secretary, is a big booster of green jobs. Many in the conservation community are particularly excited that Obama will be filling key posts with top-notch scientists who understand the gravity of climate change, including Steven Chu as energy secretary, Jane Lubchenco as administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and John Holdren as presidential science adviser.

Enviros have been less pleased with the choice of Tom Vilsack to head the Agriculture Department, noting that he's been a big booster of agribusiness and genetically modified crops. Many grassroots activists are also unhappy that Ken Salazar is headed to the Interior Department, though Salazar does have his environmental defenders. And greens don't quite know what to make of Ray LaHood, Obama's choice to head the Transportation Department.

Is This What They Call 'Clean Coal'?

Massive coal-ash spill in Tennessee threatens water supplies and public health

More than a billion gallons of coal ash have spilled from a coal-burning power plant in eastern Tennessee since Dec. 22, when a retention wall at the plant burst. That's billion with a "B," which means the amount of gunk spilled is about 100 times larger than the mess from the Exxon Valdez disaster. Gray sludge has spread across 300 acres, wiped out three homes, oozed into a tributary of the Tennessee River, and made a lot of local residents worried about their health and water supplies. Coal ash contains mercury and traces of heavy metals like arsenic and uranium. In the wake of the spill, high levels of arsenic have been found in some rivers and wells near the spill site, though authorities insist that drinking water is still safe. Enviros are seizing the opportunity to point out that "clean coal" is an oxymoron.

You Melt 2 Trillion Tons, and What Do Ya Get?

Over 2 trillion tons of land ice melted in Arctic since 2003

Over 2 trillion tons of land ice melted in the Arctic in the past five years, according to the space agency NASA, together raising global sea levels by one-fifth of an inch. "The best estimates are that sea levels will rise about 18 to 36 inches by the end of the century, but because of what's going on and how fast things are changing, there's a lot of uncertainty," said NASA's Jay Zwally.

Power From the People

Power from stationary bikes to light up Times Square New Year's sign

As part of the effort to green New Year's festivities in Times Square, battery maker Duracell has set up a "power lodge" nearby where volunteers can take a turn on stationary bikes that will power the "2009" sign marking arrival of the new year after the infamous illuminated ball drops. So far, only about 95 pedal hours of power have been collected and stored in batteries for the occasion – just 35 percent of the power needed to light the sign for 15 minutes.

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Free Books On-line

from Pixie Barrett

I came across a site that had a heap of free stuff that is always available eg govt booklets etc. and I have put together a list of what I thought were the more interesting ones.

Online Books

Listing over 30,000 free books on the Web. The Online Books Page is a website that facilitates access to books that are freely readable over the Internet. It also aims to encourage the development of such online books, for the benefit and edification of all.

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

Australian Dept of Health

All the resources about drugs are available to download, *Resources for parents* and *Resources for young people*

If you would like to receive hard copy versions of the resources you can either submit a request online, or email nationaldrugscampaign@health.gov.au. Please note it could take up to 10 days for the resources to arrive.

See All You Can See: Activity Book for Ages 6 to 8

US National Institutes of Health, Pub No. EY-52.

Contains mazes, games and comic strips designed to help children between the ages of 6 and 8 learn about parts of the eye and how they work, as well as eye safety and first aid for eye injuries. (12 pages)

Can be downloaded in PDF format from <http://catalog.inei.nih.gov/productcart/pc/viewPrd.asp?idcategory=6&idproduct=70>

(Hard copies from the USA can be ordered from \$5 for up to 25 copies but I don't know if that is the same rate for Australia)

Eat Well for Life

Healthy Ageing includes Healthy Eating. Almost one million Australians aged over 55 years are seriously overweight, according to The Statistical Bulletin on Obesity Trends in Older Australians, which is available on the Australian Government's dedicated seniors website at www.seniors.gov.au.



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Barastoc has been supplying proven and trusted quality feeds to the poultry market for over 30 years, and as the country's leading supplier of poultry feed, know how important the correct rearing and keeping of poultry is for their welfare, their health and the production of fresh eggs: hence this 7th edition.

The book includes a section on the Barastoc layer range of feeds and their use. There is also a Customer Service Centre on 1300-666-657.

Parenting book

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In this book, early childhood expert Pam Linke uses straightforward language to examine the potential pitfalls that await parents of young children - some of which you may have already encountered!

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Australian Organic Gardeners Resources Guide

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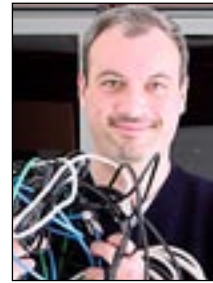
To receive your free copy complete the form at <http://www.greenharvest.com.au/guide/guide.asp>

You will also find it interesting to browse their website www.greenharvest.com.au for articles on organic pest control, organic soil improvement and a seasonal newsletter on what to do in the garden right now.

There are heaps of them!

Interview with Bill Bullock

Bill Bullock (pictured) is co-founder and CEO of Witopia, www.witopia.net - an independent US-based privacy and personal Virtual Private Network (VPN) provider. Witopia's VPN is one of the few affordable, legal ways to avoid Australia's forthcoming "Clean Feed" web censorship.



Jay Stephens spoke to Bill Bullock in December about internet freedom issues, and Bill's thoughts were pretty straightforward.

Jay: Have you heard about the Australian proposals for so-called "clean feed" internet?

BB: I don't know a whole lot about it, but I did see it was under the guise of trying to root out child pornography and things like that...

Jay: Will people be more aware of the need for a personal VPN, as we face more of these kinds of restrictions on our browsing?

BB: Witopia was originally developed as a security application, but it evolved as personal privacy became more of a popular issue, especially in the US, with the Patriot Act and things like that.

Jay: Would you see a personal VPN as a tool to take a bit of control back on that front?

BB: VPNs are going to become a necessary part of the toolkit, just as antivirus and firewalls already have. Everybody should have a VPN and encryption, not only for privacy reasons and against censorship, but also for security against identity theft. It's the price of freedom - you know, full access to information - there are bad guys lurking out there.

Jay: What if I said, "Masking your IP so that no-one can market things you don't want at you, is like theft?"

BB: I think when you use applications like facebook.com, you have to accept that you are compromising your privacy. But, I think it should be spelled out very clearly, NOT in tiny font in the terms and conditions box that most of us just click through. Even using Google; we're all going to use Google, but we have to understand that [our searches are] being cached somewhere and that it is valuable information - they use that to build other products, and God knows what else.

But, using different IP addresses through a VPN, and encrypting that information so it is not directly tied to the user, I think that's a very valuable thing to have - it's one more buffer between you and those trying to invade your privacy.

Jay: What's driving people to use these technologies?

BB: Word-of-mouth. At Witopia, we have done some advertising, but it's a service that you want to keep fairly "low-key" - you know, you don't really want to challenge government to a face-off over the issue. Most families or groups of friends have one "techie", and a VPN is kind of cool, it has sort of a "gadget" quality to it, and people like to share things like that.

Jay: What would you say to reassure users that there are no backdoors in the service?

BB: We often get the question, "This is no good, I'm not really encrypted end to end". And the technical answer to that is, no one can really do that, because if you sent

encrypted information to Yahoo or Google, they don't have the key to decrypt it. If you're going to get "snipped" or compromised, it's going to be on your local network, or as it leaves a country that has censorship (for example, Australia once clean feed is implemented). With Witopia, you are completely encrypted all the way to our gateway, and then

we decrypted it within our router which has a direct link to the Internet backbone... then for the return trip, when Google or whoever sends the information back, we re-encrypt it, and send it through the "tunnel" back to you. To Australia for example, that would be a thousands of miles long encrypted tunnel. We are much more nerds than marketers - we could have definitely made a lot more money if we had budgeted for a less secure service.

Jay: Are you optimistic about the open web and net neutrality?

BB: I saw quite a bit of the telecoms revolution... at one point here in the US there were about 5,000 ISPs, and now there's probably, you know, about 10... so I'm not excited about what I call the "re-consolidation" of the telecoms world... The Bell companies (the inheritors of the old-money US telecoms monopolies from before the internet era) have sort of won the game - won the war. We were winning a lot of the battles, and we did a lot of good, but the "suits" moved back in. A lot of those ideas that the dot-com era maintained, well, when the "grown-ups" moved back in, they looked at those ideas in a very unfair way. A VPN service is a strange niche. Let's say if Microsoft come up with a VPN product - and they probably will at some point - you know, are you really going to trust a large company (I'm a Mac guy so I'll pick on Microsoft just because...) Microsoft does a lot of great things, but are you going to trust them with your information?

Jay: What about those who say: "I've got nothing to hide, so why should I use encryption?"

BB: Yeah, members of my family said that about the phone tapping (clandestinely authorised by the outgoing Bush administration in the US). That's the problem, the government might have the best of intentions, but if just a few bad guys get in there, that could be trouble... it's always better to take care of yourself, and if you can encrypt your own stuff, you should do it.

Jay: By using a VPN, could a web surfer get themselves "targetted" for surveillance, in a repressive regime, or a country with a "Clean Feed" policy?

BB: We have switched their IP and (the ISP) can't see the switch, so - let's randomly pick on the Chinese - the Chinese would just wind up with a trail back to our data centre in the US. All the traffic is encrypted while it leaves the country, and not decrypted until it reaches our data centre, so there is no way to track them. People try to block Witopia all the time, and we've never failed to get around it. If you take it to its logical end, they would have to cut the entire country off from the internet.



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Artificial intelligence explained

The question of Artificial Intelligence in computers is often confused with the issue of 'consciousness'. While advances have been made in developing Artificial Intelligence (or 'AI') there is still a long way to go before the kinds of machine intelligences that can be said to be 'conscious' emerge. William Gibson, in his prophetic 'cyberpunk' novels (Gibson invented the term 'cyberspace' in the 1980s), *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero*, and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, gives us a few clues as to what these might be like. One thing he does seem to suggest is that computer processing power and connectivity would have to reach a 'critical mass' for this to happen, and that initially at least, it would have to be linked in some way with human consciousness.

AI in computers does replicate some of our own thinking processes. One of the major developments in AI research was 'neural networking'. Without getting too technical this means essentially, that the computer is 'told' to use several methods of solving a problem simultaneously, and to remember its 'mistakes'. It has available to it several ways of arriving at an answer to a question. As one particular way of arriving at a conclusion works more frequently than others, the computer 'learns' to try this particular method first, or to evolve 'rules' to be applied when solving other problems of a similar nature. The computer in effect 'learns' from experience, as we humans, (hopefully) do.

While AI research, particularly during the Cold War, was based on the mathematics of 'game theory' during the 1990s (and after the "Big Blue" computer defeated the world chess champion) AI moved more in the direction of data analysis. During the nineties it took off in a trajectory parallel to that of the Internet. This was not a coincidence. A key function of data analysis is to 'seek and find' the data you want. The story of Yahoo is now

by Warwick Fry

British mathematician Alan Turing, whose 1950's paper "Minds and Machines" heralded the development of Artificial Intelligence.



the stuff of legend. Yahoo was a piece of freeware developed by a couple of post graduate college students as a kind of exercise, was snapped up by a venture capital company, and is now a billion dollar enterprise. Google has replaced Yahoo's dominant position in the last few years by the simple expedient of investing most of its research money into developing better, more powerful search algorithms, which are now approaching the goal of all ambitious coders – natural language. Google is developing the facility to 'remember' what you were looking for the last time you used a certain search term. It then uses an algorithm (like neural networking) to 'remember' what happened the last time you used that word, contextualises it, and modifies its search in a way that fits your usual use of that 'word' or search term, bringing you a result that more closely matches your usual 'interests'.

But 'seek and find' intelligently is only half the story. A little known fact of the development of IT (information technology) in the 90s was the growth of "data warehouses". Few people, outside of big corporations and a few researchers, realise that 'data warehousing' and "data mining" is the biggest growing sector of the IT industry.

Data mining is used mainly for market research. The data bought is far more sophisticated than the 'customer lists' bought and sold by telemarketers. Very few of them would actually contain

the 'personal information, like names, addresses and telephone numbers. But with big enough data bases, and enough 'intelligent' cross referencing some disturbingly accurate individual profiles can be created.

Data warehousing, as well as advertising, accounts for the extraordinary success of Facebook. If one looks at the fine print of the 'terms of use' when you sign on to Facebook, you will see that Facebook 'owns' everything you put up there, including 'backup copies' (supposedly in case you remove your Facebook account and then change your mind).

As Tom Hodgkinson, the author of a *Guardian* article about Facebook pointed out:

"The creators of the site need do very little bar fiddle with the programme. In the main, they simply sit back and watch as millions of Facebook addicts voluntarily upload their ID details, photographs and lists of their favourite consumer objects. Once in receipt of this vast database of human beings, Facebook then simply has to sell the information back to advertisers."

Another of the 'terms of service' when you sign on to Facebook is that "Facebook may also collect information about you from other sources, such as newspapers, blogs, instant messaging services, and other users of the Facebook service through the operation of the service (eg, photo tags) ..." Privacy protection is sketchy at the very best. For instance Facebook "may share account or other information when we believe it is necessary..."

Facebook is estimated to be worth over 15 billion dollars to its owner, Thiel. Microsoft recently bought a 1.6 percent share of it for US\$240 million. Thiel is an ultra-conservative neoliberal with interests in genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and new technologies.

As I have said before, malevolence does not come from the machines, but from the 'minds' behind them. And it is not always safe to assume that commercial interests are invariably benevolent.

Much seems awry

by Binnah Pownall

The market has just had a huge hiccup that is usually cured with a good old war.

The haggard and dried up patsy, 'big dubya' was on the telly the other day attempting to sing up 'sustained economic growth' yet again. Barack Obama wants to serve the world up some of the same and Ruddbot has just been tuned in on it all at the G20.

Enough of us have seen the story on the money trail and how the banks – from Rothchilds and Morgans on, have taken over our so-called democratically elected governments and STILL they bang on about 'sustained economic growth' as if all the non-renewable resources aren't – and that they go on forever and the Earth can just give more gold and steel... do they really think we are so stupid?

Not many people know that our very own Commonwealth Bank started off as a 'peoples bank' owned by us and it worked just fine, keeping us out of world debt for a while, until it was gobbled up and turned against us. Wait and see what comes soon. The banks are licking their lips as we speak.

Speaking of coming soon, I pulled out a headline from page one of the *The Australian*. It had a headline reading: 'Planet In Peril – UN Report'. Oh yeah, we nearly forgot about global warming etc...

Hang on, haven't we got our concerns presently arse-about? What's an economy without a planet?

Isn't this such a great chance to start something more real than what we've been through?

What about a new system that puts people before economy and the economy is based on sharing the wealth wider. It is totally insane that world governments are not talking solutions to pollution in amongst the economic reform – if not a whole new economic model (they ARE around) so we stop trashing our mother Earth and live with less unnecessary technology.

The big boys are just letting the economy crash far enough to wipe out some new upstart

kids on the block (and a few old foes) and consolidate their earnings – just like they or their fathers have done before.

God! Please let us all wake-the-fuck-up before this insane charade goes on much longer!! How much more of this tripe they feed us as 'news' do they think we will swallow (present newspaper excepted)?

We better believe that global warming et al is not what it seems as some say, and is in fact happening to the other planets in our solar system and perhaps even us – as our cells vibrate faster as we approach and prepare to enter the portal that is 2012... whoa! Lets just say that there may be a bigger picture at play that'll somehow save our TVP bacon – IF enough of us picture – and are active in envisioning this beautiful dream the hippies have been holding forever. After all, it still is up to us and we are the ones we've all been waiting for and all that story...

We've just got to get more focused now – as a community and as a society and be active. MAKE SOME NOISE!!

Let government know we are awake! Obama doesn't give a shit about Osama (and why should he really?) and as good as he looks, he's just going to decorate the same shop window. Ruddbot seems to tag along like a good doggy...

Let's mix metaphors for fun and say this present crash and meltdown is a window of opportunity that any artful dodger would swoop through while the iron's hot and grab the bull by the horns. Why, we could even come out of it with a whole new world from here – if we choose to choose...

We can do amazing things from the comfort of our home computers now. We must be vocal – on many levels! We must talk up with politicians and the neighbours alike, a new world with a fairer system for all and one that lives within the limits of what we already have and provides now for generations to come. It's time to walk the talk and take it all the way... at least to our politicians.

It's gotta be done – otherwise they'll just run all over us in our selfish silence. For the kids' sake, just do it.

Embrace new technology in the new year



First of all, seasons greetings to all our valued clients.

To celebrate the New Year the CTC is offering an ACE auspiced, nationally accredited Certificate III in Information Technology right here in Nimbin. What's more, if you are looking for work, this course is fully funded by the Australian government under its Productivity Placement Program. Drop in at the CTC to

confirm your eligibility.

Starting during term 1, we will also be offering our usual range of IT courses, including the ever popular Introduction to Computing and Intro to Photoshop. In the meantime why not drop in and see if we can't tailor a special interest course for you and a group of friends. Alternatively, for those with skills to share, there's never been a better time to offer your services as a tutor.

To keep your computer running like new, the CTC also offers a professional computer repair and maintenance

service right here in our rooms at the Nimbin Community Centre. Now that the CTC is equipped with a high quality colour printer scanner your Nimbin CTC has also removed another reason to make the dreaded trip to Lismore, thereby helping to reduce our carbon footprint on this fragile planet. With so many reasons to visit the CTC it's just a matter of when. See you there or ring us on 6689 1183.

Cheers,

Roy Radle



NIMBIN CAFE

Check out the new decor!

"The Oasis"

Now with a huge Salad, Pasta & Sandwich Bar

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Homeopathics etc

by Tarang Bates

Thanks for the Pagans or the Christians, or whoever is responsible for the recent holy day celebrations. Wonderful to spend a few days, with family and friends. Thanks to the clouds, the trees and the breeze, without them madness may hover in the minds of many on these occasions.

Today I sit here in the peace and quiet, listening to a baby Whip bird practising its whip, it's trying hard.... not quite getting it, but getting better every day. We live in a round house and this little Whip bird flies round and around usually with its Mum, jumping through the trees and learning how to fly and all those other things that birds need to know.

I recently waved goodbye to my partner, who was leaving on a sojourn to South Australia for a big family gathering. The times that I have been there and this big family has gathered, one of the first things the boys do, is collect all the empty bottles from the last few months for recycling. Here lies the difference; South Australia has a deposit on bottles – and it's also a pretty hot/dry place (at least that's the reason they give, for the amount of beer they drink there!). It's a great way to refund the next party and an even greater way of cleaning up the environment. People do not leave bottles lying around when they are worth money – it's very simple.

Then there are the plastic bags about to be banned in South Australia – if they can do it, why not the whole of Australia, it's not rocket science – it's a really grassroots way of helping the environment and it doesn't cost the earth – just get on with it I say!

What about food colouring? Smarties will soon be colored by turmeric and spirulina, instead of 102/104/110/122/124/ etc.... sounds much more inviting, although the manufacturers are still insisting that these artificial colors, are not being removed because they affect children's health. They are being removed because of consumer demand and that's where the money lies! There does seem to be a lot of denial around and heaps of it based on money lies.

The Homeopathics for this month will be useful for summer discomfort....the effects of the heat, allergic reactions etc. The following remedies are available from Nimbin Homeopathics on 6689 1452, email tarangbates@yahoo.com.au or catch my blog page on <http://nimbinhomeopathetc.wordpress.com/>

You can also find me at the Nimbin Rainbow Lane, Saturday morning markets.

GLONOIN: is a remedy to use when the heat is really getting you down. Sunstroke, heatstroke feeling weak, dizzy and confused. Hot head, headache, feeling parched and dehydrated.

URTICA URENS: is used for prickly heat rash, mild burns, nettle rashes or itchy skin with small red dots. Urtica cream is good to apply topically. Urtica Urens is also used for mild sunburn and hives.

APIS: is a good remedy for allergic reactions, particularly when there is redness, swelling and itching. Say from mozzie, sand fly and leech bites. Also a good first aid remedy for allergic reactions to food particularly when there is swelling of the airways (while you are seeking medical help).

Ayurvedic Info

Welcome to summer!! It's hot, bright and sharp – the season of Pitta.

The recommendation for everyone, especially for Pitta dominant people, is to keep COOL and not let your Pitta get aggravated.

And how can you do this? First of all, avoid excessive hot drinks, hot food, hot spices and, of course, hot sun. Wear loose cotton, silk or hemp clothing, which is light and allows the skin to breathe. Avoid bright reds, oranges, warm yellows and black, which absorb and retain heat. Wear white, green, blue, grey and purple.

During the festive season, avoid too much whiskey, brandy, rum and red wine which are very heating. Some cool beer during hot days is fine, as is white wine and spirits – in moderation, of course. Foods that are cooling include apples, pears, plums, prunes, melon, lime, dark grapes, berries, salad vegies, cucumber, celery, coriander, rocket, basil, barley, rice, corn, millet, chickpeas, mint etc. Avoid excessive meat intake, as well as things like sour fruit, citrus, tomatoes and other nightshades eg. eggplant, chilli, mustard, sour pickles and excessive salt (which is also heating).

In general, exercise and outdoor work should be done early morning and late afternoon when there is less chance of overheating and sunstroke. Sex should be minimized in summer (it is, after all, a very heating activity) – late evening is the optimal time. In India, they sleep on the roof or on verandahs, and spend time in cool green parks with water features or caves.



John

It is considered alright to have a short nap in the hottest part of the day.

Some tips for cooling down:

- shitali pranayama: curl tongue in tube, inhale, swallow, close mouth and exhale through your nose.

- Drink lassies: 1 part yogurt to 4 parts water and mix until creamy. To this you can add chopped fresh mint; rose water; or a pinch of cummin, some grated ginger and a little black pepper.

- Sandalwood oil or paste smeared on the body, on forehead for headache.

- Bitter melon, neem, mint teas are very cooling

- Jewelry and gems recommended are silver, sandalwood beads, jade or pearl necklace, moonstone, amethyst, malachite crystals.

- Good yoga postures for summer include the fish, the camel, the boat, the cobra, the cow, the palm tree. Avoid headstands and shoulder stands.
- Coconut is the best massage oil as it is cooling and has an SPF of 8. The milk is very cooling internally.

When in doubt, do with less intensity and more ease. All you Pittas out there take a deep breath and CHILL!!!! Happy New Year....

Christina Chester's Fashion Focus

Happy New Year to our great Nimbin community. Let's have a year full of creativity and fill the place with beauty and color.

I am committed to do so again with another spectacular Fashion Show in November 13-14, 2009

It is exciting for me to be involved in supporting this textile artform of well designed and hand-crafted garments, and I love being part of the expression of individuality and freedom rather than uniformity.

But to start the year in the right spirit we are putting together a photo exhibition of the wonderful faces of backstage, crew and audience. Thorsten Jones, our so appreciated, local photographer has well captured the warmth and fun we all had creating the last show, an interesting view behind the catwalk.

We will have screens and projectors running.

Prints of your favourite pictures and the DVD of the 2008 Nimbin fashion show will be readily available. Don't miss it, it will only be for a short time on Friday 16th January opening evening at



6pm and running Saturday 17th, Sunday 18th Jan in the Nimbin Town Hall.

To bring another interesting, colorful facet of Nimbin's incredible talent on-line, I have started working on the long-awaited Nimbin Fashion Website. If you would like to be included or involved please contact me on 6689-0205.

In this regular 'Fashion Focus' I will also give you some inside profiles on other local designers and their work, techniques and collections. There is lots to do on the fashion scene – let's stitch it together.


Christina



Back stage crew members, Jimi and Angus

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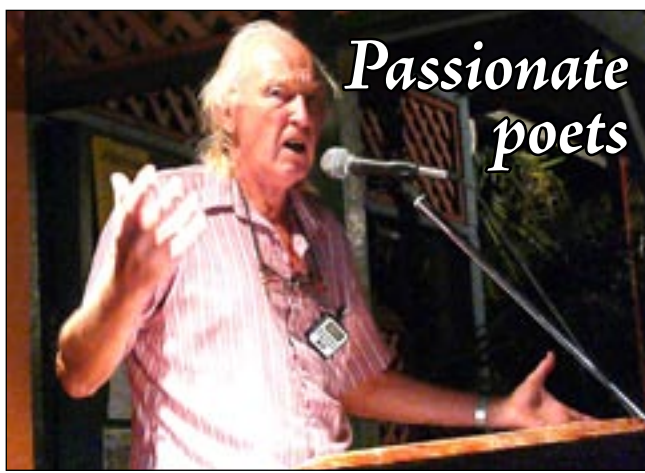


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Nimbin's monthly poetry night topped off its regular feast of poetic offerings with a sumptuous party on its last night of the year.

Len Martin (above) and organiser Gail M. Clarke (right) were among the stellar line-up of performers.

Poetry nights, held every second Thursday at the Oasis Cafe, have become a feature of Nimbin's literary life.



The Taliban and their ilk

Written after hearing a radio news bulletin that the Taliban was closing girls schools in Afghanistan.

The Taliban and their ilk
 Are not Real Men
 They are Cowards
 They are frightened of women
 Real men are not frightened of women
 Real Men cherish women as equals
 Real men love women with brains
 Real Men respect women as leaders
 Real Men love, cherish and respect women - without violence!
 The Taliban and their ilk
 Are not Real Men
 They are Cowards
 They are frightened of women
 I dedicate this poem to Bryony*
 Who is more than my equal.

Len Martin

* Bryony, a girl of 11, was joint winner of the Poet's Brawl – a one-minute slam – at this year's Woodford Festival.

On-line freebies and competitions

FREEBIES

• **Blackmores**
<http://beyourbest.blackmores.com.au/shape/welcome/Joinblackmores.aspx> Become a member online to get your free Shape Starter Kit.

• **Bosco Bear Labels**
<http://www.boscobear.com.au/competition/freelabels.html> Allow 2-3 weeks turnaround time to receive your free personalised sheet of labels

• **Oral B**
<http://www.oral-b.com/au/stages/fun-and-games.htm> To receive your free Brush Brush Brush DVD either: request a copy via participating dentists; or alternatively you can watch the 2 minute "Brush Brush Brush" segment.

Lots of other good information on looking after teeth for younger people eg BrushAlong song you can download.

• **Mail Finity**
<http://mailfinity.net/free-eraser-set.html>

Limited time offer! We will ship for free the Eraser Set with Mailfinity logo to everyone. Some restrictions apply: one per household only, not available to all countries. You must fill out all portions of the form. "Personal information collected will not be resold or used by other companies for marketing purposes."

• **Roca Wear Fragrances**
<http://www.stayonhermind.com.au/>

Fill in form to receive sample of Stay on Her Mind perfume.

• **3M**

http://www.3moffice.com.au/3msamplepack/promo_page.php

Each month a new sample pack is offered.

COMPETITIONS

• **Faraway Fairies**
<http://www.farawayfairies.com.au/competition.html>

Fill in your details and put the answers in the box as follows:

Book 1 – Quest For The Crown-Astara-Heart
 Book 2 – The Magic Emerald-Moon Fairy-Ribbon

Book 3 – Trouble In Faraway Island-Sea Fairy-Shell

Book 4 – The Fairy Gold Collectors-Ceder-Star

Book 5 – Fairy Glamour-Eden-Flower

Book 6 – The Fairy Queen's Magic-Midnight Fairy-Diamond

(You can check these if you want, I have just copied and pasted, not knowing anything about these books. There is a Series 2 competition also but I don't have answers for that so if you do, go for it.)

• **Kenwood**

http://www.kenwood-australia.com/kclub/kclub_main.asp

Each month you can enter with a chance to win great prize – changes each month. currently chance to WIN one of three FP920 Food Processors each valued at \$329.00 RRP (inc. GST)

There's heaps more – have a look around!

Pixie Barrett

New Bowen clinic starts in Nimbin

Eighth in a series by Tonia Haynes

Bowen therapist and Pranic healer

Phone 6689-9284

Over the past months I have patiently written, and many of you have patiently read, information about things that may be happening with our bodies and things that can make us feel better.

From the beginning of February 09, I will be in clinic on Tuesdays at 80 Cullen Street, Nimbin, in a room above the Oasis Cafe.

My mission statement is 'Individual Treatment for Individuals' I abide by this to the best of my ability and if I can't help, I know someone who can.

Having been in the healing game since 1988 I have a large amount of information at my fingertips, which can assist all individuals, no matter the health problem.

Officially registered as a Bowen Therapist, the large amounts of money I pay yearly to associations, insurance companies and courses to upgrade my knowledge, carry that moniker on the cheques and the returned pieces of paper.

And Bowen is wonderful. It pumps nerve and blood flow throughout the body, gently encouraging the stuck bits to let go so that they can once again receive nutritional and energetic support.

But because Bowen is only one bite at the apple and we all know how pear shaped we can become, I practice associated therapies, which backup the Bowen.

Muscle testing: A diagnostic tool often used in the chiropractic world and always during a kinesiology treatment. I use this continuously throughout the treatment to ascertain what is needed for you to receive the best results. You will also receive a full 42 muscle body balance at every treatment.

Reactive muscle clearing: If massage or chiropractic/osteopathic adjustments won't hold, you may have rebellious muscles which refuse to work with the rest of the body. This causes other muscles to be overloaded and pull the wrong way, taking your spine and neck with them. Actually, they just need a gentle talking to in a particular way.



Soft tissue spinal manipulation: If you aren't into the thrusting movements of Chiropractic, no matter how gorgeous they may be, this therapy does the same thing, but is relatively non invasive.

Pranic Healing: Life can be very tough to handle at times and we often hold old pain in the form of blocked energy which can cause physical or emotional problems right now.

Pranic healing is off the body clearing and repairing of energy vortexes (chakras) and the associated systems and organs. Does it really work? You bet your Nelly! A university degree in Korea, but us cynics who don't believe in anything we can't see are still waiting.

Emotional Freedom Technique: EFT is an emotional clearing technique that can assist in everything from losing weight to losing anger, resentment and grief.

Gone are the days when one needs to tell the psychologist every event that pissed you off or broke your heart. EFT can clear the residue energy of these events very rapidly without you sharing your history any more than you choose to. That is, if you are ready to let go of the angst.

Use whichever of these techniques are needed to assist in fulfilling your hopes of a better life.

Treatments take up to an hour. First treatments may take up to an hour and a half. All treatments \$55. Covered by most health funds. Expect to attend at least three appointments within a four week period for the best results. Phone 02 6689-9284 for appointments. I am living out of mobile range, so if you get the answering machine, leave a message, like the old days.

May we all shine in '09.

Cook's corner

Recipe of the Month

by Carolyne



Orange and Beetroot Relish with Cardamom

This is one of those multi purpose recipes you can use in any way you can imagine.

It makes a wonderful dip, is great on barbequed steak or sausages, and now

that the holiday season is with us again it is delicious to use on those leftover ham, turkey, chicken or pork. It also makes a special gift because it is made with love.

Ingredients

Grated zest of 4 oranges
 140ml fresh orange juice
 2 large beetroot (about 200g each), peeled, cut into 2cm cubes
 2 large onions (about 200g each), thinly sliced
 2 star anise
 1 1/2 tsp ground coriander
 1/2 tsp grated fresh ginger
 300g raw sugar
 2 cardamom pods

Method

Crush cardamom pods with the side of a knife, reserve seeds discard pods.

Place the cardamom seeds, beetroot, onion, vinegar, star anise, coriander, ginger, sugar, and orange juice in a saucepan. Season with salt and pepper, bring to the boil over a high heat.

Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 50-60 minutes, stirring occasionally, until relish has reduced and thickened. Stir in orange zest. Remove from heat. Pour the hot mixture into two one cup sterilized jars and seal.

Unopened sterilized jars may be stored for up to 3 months. Store opened jars in the fridge for up to 5 days.

For any information phone Carolyne at The Coffee House 6689-0590.

Thank you for the phone calls, plus the many good wishes I have received through the past year.

Till next month enjoy. Carolyne.



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