

Pub deck

I don't know if the community is aware, but the Nimbin Hotel is going to extend its deck, making it three times bigger than the existing one.

The DA application was not advertised in the NGT, or on the Town Hall windows, nor was there an information session, like there was with the new supermarket proposal.

Nimbin doesn't want multi-national suppliers of food, but this hotel development sends the wrong message about multi-national alcohol producers supplying a product that is proven unhealthy.

The hotel owners are saying this expansion is to accommodate families in the bistro, but this will put children in danger, not only in the short term, when the parents drive them home in their cars, but in the long term too.

The government has just done a major study which showed that exposing children under the age of 18 to alcohol increases the risk of them becoming alcoholics in later life.

Companies have found that if their employees have a record of drink-driving or alcohol-related crimes, they are far less likely to be employed, because with the amount of time and money to train alcohol-dependent people, and their difficulties in getting to work, companies lose money. This was discussed on 2JJJ recently.

This is an immoral development for the next generation, lacking in ethical standards, apparently with the approval of Lismore Council.

If anyone else wants to open or extend a restaurant, they have to supply carparking spaces based on the number of tables they have. Yet the hotel doesn't even have a carpark

for patrons. Why the double standard?

It's not too late to do something about this. Look for the petition around town and sign it.

G. S. Taccori
Nimbin

Weeds

People who write about Indian coral trees and feral mulberries as being "out of control" (Simon Says, NGT Feb 10), have not made the paradigm shift to the understanding that all weeds are engaged in returning organic matter to the soils that have had their organic matter removed, generally by agriculture.

Of all the factors contributing to the unsustainability of agriculture, there are none so glaring as the fact that as a civilisation we are headed out the back door because we cannot maintain organic matter levels.

When one looks at the huge trunks of camphor laurel, put there in double-quick time, one becomes aware that the weeds are *all* here to sustain us, not to cause misery.

Indian coral tree is a nitrogen fixing pioneer that feeds parrots. The fact that it is not native to Australia is beside the point. Neither am I. Any exotic germinating in Australia before five minutes past 1788 was considered native thereafter. Is Indian coral tree so naughty that it chose to germinate in the 20th century in Australia?

If there is a "naughty", it's the way Europeans have looked at land use activities. The exotics have become scapegoats for land clearing activities and the soil yells for biomass to be put back. For the soil, cane toad shit is as valuable as that from native birds.

Whatever concern one has for exotic damage can always be put into raising native

seedlings, joining a landcare group or becoming vegan or vegetarian. Death-dealing of exotics has never sat well with the hippy in me – it opposes the *ahimsa* of leave-well-enough-alone.

The emerging paradigm for dealing with exotics is to pay them less attention and act to ensure native habitat is extended by how we live our lives, so native animals increase to balance those lost to exotics.

If one stays with the old paradigm, one finds oneself engaged in ludicrous activities, such as thinking feral mulberries are "naughty", even as we try to get them to go more wild in our polycultural agricultures.

Geoff Dawe
Byrrell Creek

Water

In mid-February I attended a community working group meeting for the Tweed Shire Water Augmentation Project.

I was a guest speaker as an affected property owner at Byrrell Creek, and spoke on the social implications of living 300 metres downstream from the dam wall, and the effect it would have on myself and my family. I travelled from Brisbane to make this presentation.

We had to wait outside for 10 minutes, we were given 5 minutes to speak, no notes were taken, and the whole process of the meeting was very unpleasant.

Our council representative Councillor Dot Holdom was the timekeeper and not once did she raise her eyes from the stopwatch to show respect, or that she was at least appearing to listen to what I had to say on the social impacts of the proposed construction of a dam in such an environmentally sensitive area.

When I purchased my dream home, land and waterfall frontage, all fully council compliant. I was, so to speak, over the moon.

All searches came back and there were no requirements from the proposed purchase and a certificate of non-action was issued by Council.

Even when speaking to David Oxenham, manager of water services over five years ago, he assured me that under current plans, my property would not be affected by future dam resumptions.

However the proposed dam buffer zone has now been increased to 250 metres and technically I am now in what I call "no man's land".

No person would consider buying my home, if for some reason I had to sell, or consider securing finance over my property.

If this is Tweed Shire's idea of a community consultation, then I think it is just a sham.

Malcolm Bailey
Byrrell Creek Road

Community celebration plans

The Range-to-Range Futures group – the crew who brought you the Looking Forward-Looking Back community celebrations at Hanging Rock Hall – are in the planning stages of their next community celebration.

We are seeking input from community members towards the planning of this next event, which will have a **Youth focus**.

Ideas and suggestions are sought, along with energy and enthusiasm for planning the event.

To register your interest, or for further information, please contact frank@dreamspace.com.au.

Rebecca Ryall
Nimbin

Notices

House to Rent

Nimbin mod furn home 2 brms w/ensuites, office, auto-garg, air-con, private garden, quiet street, \$350 p/w. Phone 6689-0169 or 0409-075-174.

Wanted to Rent

3-4 br home in Nimbin, \$200-\$270 per week. Good tenant. Further information: Tammy Smith 0421-612-653.

Wanted to Rent

Mature, quiet non-smoker seeks 2-3 br house on acreage. No pets or children. Phone Janet 0438-430-109.

Wanted to Rent

Local resident requires new dwelling. Looking for 2 br house within 15 kms of town but anything considered. Reliable tenant with references, experienced gardener & maintenance person, part time parent. Phone 0458-229-199.

Small Van Wanted

Lite ace or similar to covert to electric van. Ideally a small van with a good body, manual gear box and a blown motor, since that will be ripped out, and unregistered, since it will need a blue slip anyway, for not much money. Phone Rainer 6689-7491, or leave message at Flowtrack 6689-0408.

Classes

Yoga

Yoga classes on Thursdays 9.30am-11am at Lillifield community hall, next to Bakersvale school. Suitable for all levels of experience. Beginners Welcome! Contact April: 6689-7539.

Bellydance

Monsoon Tribal Style classes with Delight at Dance Studio, Nimbin Community Centre: Tuesday 11am tribal style belly; 12.15pm tribal style drum; Thursdays 6.15pm tribal style belly. Phone Delight 6689-1918 or Donna 0438-515-516.

Meetings

Nimbin Central School P&C Association

Annual General Meeting, Monday 8th March at 4pm in the school's staff room.

Tunable Creek Landcare

Next meeting is on Friday 26th March at 5pm, at 483 Tuntable Creek Road, The Channon. For more information, phone Amanada on 6688-6385.

Police Community BBQ

Next is Thursday 8th April, 12-2pm at Nimbin Police Station, opposite hospital, Cullen Street.

Position Vacant

Nimbin Community Centre Co-ordinator

Must have excellent administrative and communication skills, with a proven ability to take initiative and work unsupervised.

Part-time, minimum 10hrs pw.

For more information email:

ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au

Applications close 19th March 2010.

About us

Editor: Bob Dooley

Assistant Editor: Sue Stock

Layout: Jo Evans, Bob Dooley

Photographers: Sue Stock, Pam Bourne, Thorsten Jones, Len Martin, Natascha Wernick

Distribution: Angus, Alex, Coralie, Ben, Gabrielle & Warren (Bellingen), Dave (West End), Martin (Maleny), and Matt (Glebe).

Bookkeeper: Martha Paitson

Website: David McMinn
www.nimbingoodtimes.com

NGT is auspiced by the Nimbin Community School Co-operative Ltd.

Next deadline:
Wednesday 24th March

Email: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Please limit contributions to 600 words or less.



"Make It, Bake It, Grow It"

Next Market

14th March

9am - 3pm

Band of the Day:

Somersault

Charity of the Day:

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P&C Association

Enquiries: 6688-6433

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Simon says...



by Simon Clough
Lismore City Councillor

Some mornings you just can't win. This morning the rain had stopped so I jumped on my road bike and headed off. At the 5 kilometre mark I got soaked to the skin, however the rain was warm so I pushed on. I find my bike a bit of a "dream machine". There's something about the cadence (cycling term for rhythm) of my legs going up and down that lulls the brains and aids reflection. Of course Council matters rise to the surface easily.

You might remember I mentioned TransGrid last month and its plans to build a 330kV power line from west of Tenterfield to Lismore, costing up to \$283 million. I estimate for that amount of money 18,000 homes (Lismore has 14,000) could have a photo voltaic system that would meet average electricity needs. I was delighted that Council passed my motion requesting TransGrid to engage consultants to independently assess demand management, projected electricity demand, energy efficiency and local power generation options for the New South Wales Far North Coast. Who knows what response it will receive.

Oops, there goes another 4WD ute with the driver, eating breakfast while on his mobile phone, giving me a generous couple of millimetres clearance as he charges off to work.

I was disappointed from a sustainability perspective about the Council decision to proceed with the development of the North Lismore plateau at this time. I would like to see the density of housing increased in the existing Lismore town area. In doing this we may be able to generate an effective public transport system and encourage more people to walk and cycle to meet their everyday needs.

Ahh! beginning to dry out,

there's just enough breeze to help dry me. I do hate it when my cycling shoes are totally sodden.

I start doing presentations next week to inform and encourage ratepayers to support a special Environment Levy for \$200,000 p.a. which does not even amount to the cost of a cup of coffee per week for each ratepayer. Currently the whole Environment section of Council runs on \$10,000 p.a. so it means that Council is almost totally dependent on external grants for funding. The good news is that Council has recently more than doubled its environmental staff. If the community agrees to the Environment Levy the new staff will be able to get cracking on the backlog of policies and projects that have been building up over the years.

It's only fitting that this region, which is one of the top three richest and most diverse regions for flora and fauna in Australia, should be getting the attention it deserves from Council. It should also be remembered that this region has the highest frog, snake and marsupial diversity in Australia!

My motion to have a detailed review of Council's operations in Roads, Workshop Fleet, Quarry and Asphalt, Parks, Water and Wastewater by competent independent consultants is going ahead, with Council calling for expressions of interest. It's almost 10 years since there's been a review of this area of Council's operations and I reckon it's time they were closely examined.

How is that when you're on a bike you always seem to be riding into a headwind! Does the wind magically turn when you head for home? Now is the time for the big questions, should I have a coffee on the way home? Yes, isn't that the purpose of cycling! What about raisin toast? Maybe a half-serve, after all I have been soaked in the rain and anyway how much weight can a little bit of toast soggy with butter really add! Besides it is important to support small local businesses.

Looking forward to the Blue Moon Cabaret on 13th March.

You can contact me on 6624-2894 or at simonclough@internode.on.net

From the Mayor's desk



by Jenny Dowell
Mayor of Lismore

Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au

Special Rate Variation

As readers may know, Council is commencing a comprehensive process to gauge community support for a special rate increase next financial year. If approved by the Minister for Local Government, Council's general rates will increase by up to 3.51% on top of the recently announced 2.6% rate peg rise for 2010/11.

The special rate increase will generate an extra \$800,000 annually. The extra money will be spent on roads (\$500,000), environmental issues (\$200,000) and business promotion (\$100,000) for the Lismore local government area. The roads and environment elements (3.07%) will be applied to all ratepayers. Business ratepayers in the urban area will also pay for the business promotion element (0.44%).

Over the past year Council has closely examined its budget. Whilst some savings have been made, it is clear that a special rate increase is necessary to progress our roads and environmental programs.

Elsewhere in the NGT, you will find information about the ways in which you can get involved in

the processes Council is undertaking.

The conversations with the community that we will hold over the next month will be the most broadly-based ever undertaken by this Council. For the first time, an on-line forum will allow interactive communication between Council and residents. It is an exciting step for this community and I look forward to your participation.

I encourage you to converse with us in which ever way you are able and look forward to hearing from you or seeing you at the forum to be held in Nimbin on Wednesday March 10, at 7pm. Regardless of how you get involved, I assure you that Council is committed to gathering all opinions and respecting the community's views in our decision-making.

Rate pegging

The NSW Minister for Local Government has announced that the 2010-11 rate peg will be 2.6%. This is the amount by which Councils can lift rates without requiring permission for a SVR. It is unclear how the rate peg is calculated but the new peg is considerably less than the 3.5% of the current year. The reduction cuts approximately \$200,000 from Council's revenue. Local Governments throughout NSW have called for an end to rate pegging. We are the only state with this artificial cap on rates and with increasing costs and community expectations we are falling further behind in our ability to deliver.

North Lismore land

The major item on the Agenda for Council's February Meeting was the inclusion of land on the North Lismore Plateau in Council's Urban Land Release Strategy. Staff had expressed concerns that the NLP land could not be progressed in the 10 year timeframe of the

RLRS but Councillors determined that the land should be included and the landowners can carry costs for any required studies.

Nimbin Caravan Park

Council received a report on the possible sale or lease of several Council-owned properties. An earlier Council decision was to seek expressions of interest (EOI) in the sale or lease of the Nimbin Caravan Park but to retain ownership of the Pool. EOI for the caravan park will be sought around the time of NGT publication and a report will come back to Council for a decision.

Gungas Road

Council held an Extraordinary meeting on February 23 to consider a request by the developer of land at 237 Gungas Rd to change the Planning Agreement to reduce the requirements for roadworks. After long discussion and debate, Councillors accepted the staff recommendation and voted 6/2 (Councillors Graham and Battista against, Councillors Marks and Chant absent, Cr Meineke declaring an Interest) not to reduce the requirement for a bond to be lodged or roadworks to be completed.

Southern Trunk Main

The Extraordinary meeting also accepted the recent \$6 million interest free loan from the NSW State Government to build the Southern Trunk Main, a major sewer line to service new land release area in Goonellabah. The cost of the STM is estimated to be

around \$12 million and the work will be undertaken by the Department of Public Works.

Financial Assistance

Each year, Council makes a donation to our rural halls for maintenance (\$1000) and General Rates (average \$600), Community Organisations and to our valued Rural Fire Brigades (\$265.00) The amounts may be small but I know they are appreciated by the organizations that do so much to sustain our communities.

RoadInfo

While last year's May floods may have faded from most memories, the work continues. Oliver Ave in Goonellabah has finally reopened after a new bridge was constructed over its gaping chasm. Road closure information is highly sought after by residents and travelers so it is great that a new website www.myroadinfo.com.au has been launched to provide region-wide information on road access. Just by logging on, people can see which roads are closed and thereby plan travel for time and money savings but more importantly for safety.

IWD and YWILG

March 8 is International Womens Day and this year is the Year of Women in Local Government. Thinking about those two facts, reminds me that it is never too early to start thinking of standing for election to your local Council in September 2012. If any of your readers would like to discuss how to prepare, please do not hesitate to contact me. Meanwhile, Happy IWD!!

WANTED:
PROMOTION STRATEGIST
Nimbin Community Centre seeks expressions of interest from those with experience in promotion activities, with a view to developing a strategy to promote Nimbin Community Centre, its website and the Nimbin Markets.
Contact: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au for information by 19th March 2010.

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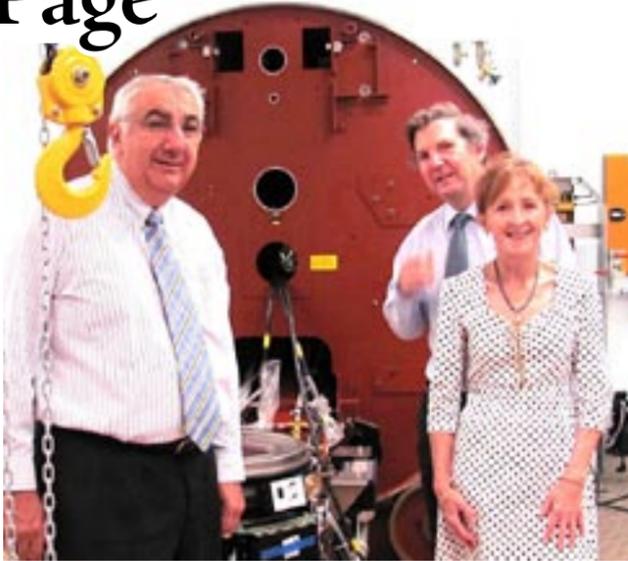
Janelle's Page

by Janelle Saffin, MP

In February I inspected the nearly completed Integrated Cancer Care Centre at Lismore Base Hospital and it was wonderful to see the hospital's first linear accelerator in the process of being installed.

The \$2.7 million ELEKTA linear accelerator will be a great boost for local cancer patients, providing easy access to the highest quality, safe radiation oncology services.

The \$15 million to fast track the Cancer Care Centre was one of my major election commitments and I'm pleased to report it is on track to be operational from the end of May this year.



Radiotherapy Unit on track. Janelle Saffin MP and State Member for Lismore Thomas George inspect the new linear accelerator with North Coast Area Health Service CEO Chris Crawford.

Students missing out as Coalition blocks Youth Allowance bill

As the new academic year begins, thousands of students, many locals, are missing out on Youth Allowance entitlements and scholarships because the Nationals and Liberals are holding up the Youth Allowance legislation in the Senate.

I have had many students and parents contacting my office desperate to find out when the Bill will be passed, and I've advised them to contact the National and Liberal Party Senators who are blocking it and importantly Tony Abbott who is leading the charge to retain privilege.

The Coalition wants to keep an old scheme where a student with parents earning only \$40,000 missed out on the full allowance, while a student with parents earning \$300,000 could get full allowance through a loophole in the gap year provision.

Nationals Senator Fiona Nash has admitted there was rotting of the old system, but she still supports it.

The Rudd Government's legislation has the support of every university in Australia, every State and Territory Education Minister, the National Union of Students, the Postgraduate Student Association, the Australian Greens and every Independent Member of Parliament except Senator Fielding.

The Vice Chancellors of every university in Australia have written to every Senator urging them to pass the bill because '... it properly targets less well-off students across Australia for whom income support is critical.'

But Federal National MP Luke Hartsuyker wants to keep the old system. Does he expect us to believe he knows more about student needs than the National Union of Students and every Vice Chancellor in Australia?

Clearly he and the other Federal Nationals are more interested in supporting a privileged few than in fair and equitable access to education.

The Federal Nationals did nothing to address the decline in student participation from rural and regional areas over the last five years of the Coalition Government and

now through their actions in the Senate they are denying new scholarships and increased funding to thousands of students in rural and regional areas.

Under the legislation, many students from regional areas who move away from home to study would be eligible for new relocation scholarships of \$4,000 in the first year and \$1,000 a year after that, as well as an annual start-up scholarship of \$2,254 when the scheme is fully up and running.

How can the National Party Senators block a bill that will so clearly benefit thousands of young people from rural and regional Australia? It is time for them to listen to the education sector and students who want the Bill passed and the scholarships paid.

Details of the new Youth Allowance are available online at www.deewr.gov.au/youthallowance

Janelle

Member for Page
63 Molesworth Street
Lismore
Phone 1300-301-735



Helping older people find services

by Justine Elliot, MP

The Rudd Government offers many services to help older Australians and it is important that you can quickly and easily find and contact the service that you need.

I recently had the privilege of launching the Australian Government Directory of Services for Older People 2010.

The free directory provides important information for older people and their families with chapters on accessing aged care, legal rights, finance and health.

The directory is easy to read, provides a clear and concise outline of the service on offer and provides contact details to help you identify and contact the service that may best meet your needs.

Copies of the directory are free and are available by contacting the Aged

Care Information Line on 1800-500-853, by contacting a Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800-052-222 or through Centrelink offices.

Smarter Schools

The Rudd Government is committed to an education system where every child receives the highest quality education.

As part of this commitment, the Rudd Government has entered into Smarter Schools National Partnerships with the states and territories. The partnerships focus is on addressing disadvantage, supporting teachers and improving literacy and numeracy.

In NSW, 738 schools will participate and share in more than \$870 million from the Rudd Government over the life partnerships with the NSW Government also providing funding.

Thirteen North Coast schools will participate in the partnerships, including Nimbin Central School, Tuntable Creek Public School, Tuntable Falls Community Primary School and Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education.

Through the partnerships, these schools will have access to funding that will make a real difference to the education of North Coast children.

Do Not Call Register

The Do Not Call Register is an Australian Government initiative that provides Australians with the opportunity to 'opt out' of receiving certain telemarketing calls.

You can list your Australian fixed line and mobile numbers on the Do Not Call Register, provided the numbers are used primarily for personal or domestic purposes.

It is important to remember that registrations are only valid for three years. If you registered your number three or more years ago, you will need to register your number again to ensure your number remains on the Do Not Call Register.

During the registration process, you can request that an email be sent to you before your registration expires.

To register your phone number simply go to www.donotcall.gov.au or phone 1300-792-958.

Need Assistance?

If you ever need assistance with any Federal Government matters please call my office on 1300-720-675.

Justine.

Member for Richmond
107 Minjungbal Drive
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MANY THANKS, NIMBIN LIFESTYLE REAL ESTATE

I'M SOLD!
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Nimbin Lifestyle

I rang the real estate in Nimbin because I wasn't having much luck selling through other agents.

John came out to list the home with Lis; they took plenty of time to get to know the property and us. John said he would sell the property and he did. John's never-give-up attitude won through. In fact, the whole staff at Nimbin Lifestyle really pulled together to get the job done.

John is an optimistic and dynamic sales person, but always at ease when it counts, his fun and easygoing nature was great through the selling process.

Thanks to John we will now be able to pursue our future dreams. We wish you well.

- Ted and Pam.

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UNDACUV-AVATAR...

More from the journal of a confused Undacuva

Avatar the movie, you may not realise, was inspired by, well not exactly me, but definitely partly me and all the other Undas who've been converted by those they are spying on.

The movie's success has exploded the Unda profession no end. Over fifty percent of "Join the Cops" enquiries this last month wanted to be Undas. So many the Big Bosses decided to introduce quality control. We've never had it before, in fact there were never enough applicants, but this new development has sent people into shock.

Half our old informers can't read and many are violent and used to getting away with anything they fancy. Often they were hired to do just that. For years it's been official policy to "maintain the mess called Nimbin". The Old Boss used to repeat endlessly, "we can't have those hippies looking peaceful, no matter what". Which justified all sorts of disruptive behaviour for us Undas as you can imagine.

Not one local informer passed the new quality control tests. Can you believe it? And with a line a mile long of new Undas wanting work (should that read weed?) the PTB, (Powers That Be) saw it as an opportune time to sign out some undaperformers. "Out with the new and in with the old", announced the Boss, completely arseabout as

usual. No one had ever been sacked before, or we couldn't remember anyone.

All outgoing Undas were offered a grand a month or half a pound instead. The Unda Union was awesome and we settled on a grand a month PLUS an ounce and a half a week. We then signed our life away with promises to never reveal the secrets but they lost all the hard earned knowledge acquired from years of sitting in smoky feral hippy camps with recorders taped in our Undies. Which usually meant sex was off the menu. Not always easy I can tell you.

Several of us were immediately snapped up by P.I. Inc for the Obama visits Oz in March Mission. It's a daring business the Politics of Unda. The only skin protecting me now is 'the knowledge' as it's known in the trade. Believe me I got dirt on everyone and what I'm about to tell you could get me in a lot of trouble.

But it's in the nature of Undas to take risks and in fact many of the mercenaries, or "private contractors" as we call them in Kabul today, cut their teeth in Nimbin. Your village has a lot to brag about, if you want too. Many, many firsts.

I'm on special "local knowledge consultant pay" for the next month as it seems they really are considering Nimbin and the

Tweed as Obama's spot to visit. Rudd's people have been asking all about 'how to roll a fatty' so Kevin won't look too inexperienced at the planned Joint Session!

Apparently the President jumped at the chance to reassure Rudd about inhaling when the Dalai Lama talked to him about the persecution of Nimbin at their recent meeting. Told you everything happens for a reason!

This week I've been keeping a protective eye on the four CIA early birds who are filming the Nimbin street scene endlessly, you must have seen them. Apparently they were going to replace several hundred local identities with their own people as lookalikes for the day Obama comes but matching the freaks in this village is not as easy as they imagined. So if we miss out on the Presidential Tour you now know why.

Footnote: The Plantation Squad said to thank whoever left the note for them with the boxes of several thousand seedlings on the Kyogle Road.

But no, they can't leave just because they filled their quota in the first hour, in fact it may even mean they get a bigger budget next year seeing "they saved so many people".

And it's not true our chopper is dropping thousands of seeds as it flies over National Parks with your weed. It's more like millions.

2010 MardiGrass Update



MAY 1st & 2nd is not so far away suddenly so it's fortunate we have most of the jigsaw in place. If you are one of the missing pieces, meetings are Fridays from 4.20pm in the HEMP BAR or you can leave messages in the pink MardiGrass book behind the counter in the Embassy shop.

- Musicians and performers wanting to play should register sooner rather than later.
- Local residents or businesses with special needs or requests please get in touch. The DA plan is on display at present in the papers and seems to be on track.

- If you want to get involved as a volunteer, please drop in and write in the book when and what you want to do, what skills you have, contact no etc etc.
- Speakers booked in include Professor of Criminology from Bond University Paul Wilson and Dr Alex Wodak from St Vincents Hospital in Sydney again, to inform us of the latest in our hopes for cannabis law reform. Dr Andrew Katelaris is also coming again to do a workshop on the wonders of hemp seed.
- Several overseas visitors confirmed including Dr Bob Melamede who will love Nimbin, we expect.
- Peace Park is to be the focus with 3 big gigs there on a new stage.... Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Confirmed music includes Anarchist Duck, Marshall and the Fro, Pagan Love Cult, A French Butler Called Smith, Fyah Walk, Groove Foundation, Drunken Munk, Red Belly Black, 50 Bags, A Little Province in China, Diana Anaid, Imandan... there will be lots more.
- There is a Buskers competition this year with tokens (similar to tokens!) to be given to your favourite.
- The Hemp Rope Tug-O-Peace is a ramped-up event in the Hemp Olympix this year so get your team of 5 (five) together. All five team members have to have something in common!
- Watch out for a MardiGrass warm up at the now annual April Fools Day Polite Raids.

OBAMA LOOK-A-LIKE

2010 NIMBIN MARDI GRASS - SPECIAL AWARD



Do you look like the US President?
Can you deliver evidence based drug policies?
Will you keep the confidence of the people?
Have you endorsed the need for medical marijuana?
Did you smoke cannabis for pleasure?
WINNER ANNOUNCED at the Cannabis Law Reform Rally, Sunday MAY 2nd, PEACE PARK, Nimbin.

Drug Law & Hemp Burgers at SCU

On Thursday 18th February the Student Union of Southern Cross University hosted a gathering of students, activists and academics at an afternoon symposium. The event brought together many of the leading voices in the drug law reform debate in NSW.

After being welcomed to the symposium by James Moylan, the Secretary of the Union of Students at SCU, the guests were then treated to a series of short talks, culminating in a keynote address by the President of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, Dr Alex Wodak.

Following the lectures and prior to an extended Question and Answer session, Simonetta and the Hemp Bar staff provided tasty hemp-burgers and other cultured cannabis-based nibbles – all the while the Hemp Embassy

POLITE FORCE guarded the Zest function room from any evil vibes or bad ju-ju. Michael Balderstone of the Hemp Embassy [www.hempembassy.net] provided 'a view from the streets of Nimbin', highlighting the manifold hypocrisies that might be identified in having multi-million dollar helicopters full of heavily armed policemen flying over North Coast valleys full of poor hippies in an effort to help middle-aged and middle-class Sydney residents feel safer.

Jacob Potkonyak, the President of the Macquarie University-based 'Students for Sensible Drug Policy' [www.ssdp.org] provided an overview of the rationale underlying their principled opposition to the current 'irrational' drug laws in NSW. Jacob particularly focused on issues of particular

concern to students and other younger members of our community.

Neil Pike from Nimbin, billed as 'a film-maker, drug law reform activist and professional weirdo', also focused on the hypocrisies surrounding the issue of drugs. Neil talked at length about a rarely reported phenomenon where young (and not so young) Australians gather together and get extremely intoxicated by inhaling cannabis smoke just for the fun of it! Of course, this provoked gales of laughter from an obviously incredulous audience.

Dr Alex Wodak (pictured above right) [www.adlrf.org.au] then provided the headline presentation: 'Taxing and regulating recreational cannabis and providing medicinal cannabis: the why and how.' In this dissertation Dr Wodak demonstrated why he is such a



sought-after voice of clarity in the sometimes murky world of the drug law debate.

Dr Wodak started his presentation with a review of recreational cannabis use in Australia, pointing to the ongoing strong demand for the drug with more than 2 million Australians consuming it at least once per year. This ranks Australia as the third highest consumer of cannabis in the world (per capita), with cannabis being the third most commonly consumed drug in our society, and the cannabis industry's annual turnover currently twice that of the wine industry.

An overview of the changing nature of public

opinion in both Australia and across the world then prefaced a discussion of how we might better regulate the production and sale of cannabis in a legal manner. The many difficulties that might be faced in legalising, taxing and regulating the cannabis trade were not glossed over. Each potential difficulty was addressed and dealt with rationally and logically, leading to a series of intense discussions prompted by questions from the floor during the closing Question

and Answer phase of the symposium.

Following the event, at least three-quarters of those attending stood around and discussed Drug Law Reform issues for over an hour outside the venue and then these discussions were again taken up during a dinner that night held in honour of Dr Wodak at the Fire in the Belly Pizza restaurant in Lismore. The organisers of the event hailed it as a huge success and have intimated that it might be repeated again next year.

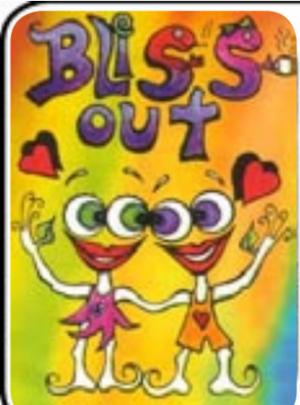


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The Beat Goes On

Rainbow Dreaming at Westfest, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

by Harsha Prabhu

This is the third article on the Rainbow Dreaming tour of the US, which started in Oct 2009 in New York and ended in San Francisco.

Flowers in your hair

Before Woodstock in 1969, way before anything of consequence emerged on the east coast, it was San Francisco that was the spiritual and temporal home of the alternative scene in the US. San Francisco, city of St Francis, patron saint of all creatures great and small and the holy land to every hippie who ever dreamt of wearing flowers in their hair.

From the Trips Festival, to the Human Be In, to the



Summer of Love in 1967, San Fran was where it was all happening. And Haight-Ashbury, a genteel, seedy, low rent neighbourhood on the edge of Golden Gate Park, was for a short time in that golden, paisley and psychedelic-hued year, the counter culture capital of the world.

Haight-Ashbury today resembles a counter culture tourist arcade, peppered with boutiques and headshops selling all manner of things hippie.

Paul, owner of Land of the Sun, a gift shop with a penchant for hippie paraphernalia, had been in the Haight in the golden age. "I was there before, during and after. I remember \$2 concerts with the Dead, Hendrix, Santana, that went on till 2am; Janis driving up and down the strip in her Porsche..."

"That was then. But the Haight still has a spark. The community has managed to block certain kinds of development, like chain stores from moving in. There's resistance to the Haight becoming like any

other suburb. Sure, the Haight is an echo of what it used to be, but it's an echo worth listening to. The Haight is unique, it's a peace bracelet."

Westfest

It looked like all the foot soldiers in the armies of peace, love and enchantment and their camp followers, had assembled for Westfest, at Speedway Meadows, Golden Gate Park, on Sunday 25 October.

Native American elders, Zen Buddhist priests, musicians for peace, the butterfly folk, the rainbow family of love and light, aging hipsters and young ferals, the Hells Angels and the Hare Krishnas, Guitars Not Guns and Grannies for Medical Marijuana, flaunting their glad rags, flying the flag, flashing the peace sign, getting high on the herb, the vibe, the roar of the music from three stages and the brilliant sunshine. Every surviving rock and roll star from the sixties and seventies (and their dog) seemed to be there. Ray Manzarek from The Doors, Paul Kantner from Jefferson Airplane, Denny Lane from The Moody Blues, Country Joe McDonald, plus the original cast from Hair. Some old

timers would have had flashbacks and it wouldn't have been the acid! And the order of the day, proclaimed by speaker after speaker, was the same: make love, not war. It was the favourite sixties mantra all over again! "Are we proud to be hippies", the MC would yell and the crowd, estimated at around 100,000, would respond with a jubilant roar.

Westfest was the culmination of the Rainbow Dreaming US tour. The Rainbow Dreaming exhibit was right in the middle of the vast concourse between the two main stages, so hundreds of punters got to see the exhibit.

The Beat Goes On

My last port of call in San Fran was North Beach, the hangout of the Beats. The Beats were the precursors of the hippies.

While the Beats were more into booze and benzedrine, as opposed to the psychedelic reveries of the hippies, they laid the groundwork for the hippie movement. Their Rimbaudian manifesto of excess as the path to satori, flirtation with eastern philosophies and eclectic approach to sexual liberation was the seedbed that sprouted the summer of love.



Rainbow Dreaming at Westfest

"Poetry is the shadow cast by our streetlight imaginations", wrote Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Beat poet and founder of City Lights, the famous publishing house. City Lights still stands, along with Vesuvio, the Beat watering hole. Alongside runs Jack Kerouac Alley. Across the street is the Beat Museum.

I spent that last afternoon surrounded by Beat memorabilia, including Kerouac's typewriter, the signed, annotated copy of Ginsberg's 'Howl' and the voices of my youth. Some of those voices sound strangely prescient. Here is Ken Kesey, author of 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', friend of the Hells Angels and the Grateful Dead, Merry Prankster and veteran of many an Acid Test, on

America's 'civilising mission' in another war. "You can't bomb for a humane reason. What we should do is just Mother Teresa them to death with love. It's that old hippie nonsense but it's still the best stuff there is."

"I see the Beat Generation as an enlightening movement," said Beat Museum founder Jerry Cimino. "Because they followed their dreams they changed the world."

But I'll let the maddest Beat of them all have the last word: "All human beings are also dream beings. Dreaming ties all mankind together." Jack Kerouac, Book of Dreams.

For more info see www.rainbowdreaming.org For the full US tour blog see www.go2harsha.wordpress.com/

Nimbin goes to Tasmania's Forest Festival

Jackeys Marsh Forest Festival was "the best ever", according to all who went.

Diana Anaid went off as the headline act, cheered on by all the Nimbin crew who came down for the event. Mookx Hanlon wowed the big crowd at his ukulele workshop and Lisa Yeates opened the festival as MC and then did a set, playing many old favourites and forest songs.

Also there from Nimbin

was Gail Clarke and her grandson Nathaniel, Annie Heisman, Rick Bindon, Megan James and Jackie Garland, plus ex-Nimbin resident Robyn Craig, down from Canberra.

Held over the weekend of 5-7th February, the crowd of over 800 enjoyed an easy relaxing time and organisers were very happy with the event. "We are also over the moon that we were able to successfully power the

festival and stage with solar power," said Lisa Yeates, one of the co-ordinators.

"This has fulfilled a long held dream held by Friends of Jackeys Marsh who organise the festival."

Our main aim was to educate about sustainable living options and show off the beautiful forests and environment of Jackeys Marsh valley with a large programme of Guided Walks, workshops and a beautiful Forest Arts Trail showcasing Tasmanian artists' works, set in the stunning forest above the festival site.

"This festival has been happening since 1982, has played a big part in making sure the forests are never logged," said Lisa.

It will happen again in 2012. Start planning now.



Solar powered Jackeys Marsh Forest Festival 2010



Lisa Yeates



Forest Art Walk



Forest Festival crowd doing Tai Chi

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Latin America: It's not your party, but you can cry if you want to

by Warwick Fry

The Obama administration's failure to correct the travesties of the Bush regime's policies in Latin America are biting him on the bum.

At last week's "Rio Summit" Latin America, as well as much of the Caribbean took the unprecedented step of excluding the US and Canada from a 'bloc' party that included all the Latin American countries (OK, the Peruvian President stayed away, but he sent a senior diplomat) and 28 out of 35 Caribbean countries. Cuba of course, was one of them.

The new 'bloc' could well replace the OAS (Organisation of American States), which has been largely controlled by the US and Canada. The US and Canada vetoed an OAS resolution not to recognise the legitimacy post-coup elections in Honduras on 29th November last year and have lifted sanctions on the coup regime proposed by the OAS and given the 'new' President a spurious legitimacy.

Human Rights have gone

out the window in Honduras with a continuation of repression by the coup regime, although with a slight alteration in tactics. Public confrontations with police and anti-coup protestors have been minimised and instead a campaign of selective 'death squad' style terror assassinations of 'activists' has replaced the baton charges, tear gas, beatings and hosing from armoured vehicles.

Since the 'new' President, Porfirio Lobo assumed power on 28th January, there have been over 250 documented Human Rights violations including 16 assassinations, the latest being the daughter of an anti-coup radio identity, in front of her two children aged two and eight years old.

Obama last year promised to 'heal' the rifts between Latin America and the US at a Pan American convention in Trinidad Tobago. He shook hands with President Hugo Chavez and accepted a copy of "The Open Veins of Latin America" by Eduardo Galeano, a seminal and profoundly influential book that documents the century and

more of US and European intervention, manipulation and exploitation of Latin America, first published in the 1970s.

But nothing changed. The key actors are the same. He restored diplomatic relations with Venezuela – but with the same diplomat who was involved with the infamous US engineered coup against Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973.

Negroponte, who devised the Phoenix program in Vietnam, was later appointed Ambassador to Honduras when the Honduran Death Squads were established and Honduras was providing a base for the terrorist 'contra war' against Nicaragua in the 1980s.

He was US Ambassador to Iraq at the time of the Abu G'raib torture incidents, is Hillary Clinton's "special advisor" on Latin American affairs.

The man assigned as the US Ambassador to the OAS (Organisation of American States) is the same man who was the 'Embassy Official' in Guatemala who suggested that the signs of cigarette



The Rio Summit

burns on a nun tortured by US-'advised' paramilitary squads (by mistake, as it turned out) were a result of 'strange lesbian rituals' (this was the defense of the Guatemalan military when she later sued them).

The list goes on – the background of the US Ambassador to Honduras during and after last year's coup, various other personnel hanging around the US Embassy in Honduras... they all have a record and more than murky pasts.

Obama seems to have been happy enough to go along with these entrenched officials who could well be put up before a tribunal for war crimes and follow the Hillary

Clinton line on the outrageous position of Honduras.

On the level of RealPolitik there is concern among the Latin American countries over the expansion of the US military presence in Latin America. Nine huge new US military bases in Panama and Colombia, five of them right on the Venezuelan border. Brazil can't be feeling too comfortable about the US controlling the upper Amazon.

And in spite of President Uribe of Colombia being viewed as a catspaw of the US, he did attend the 'exclusive' meeting. There is an amusing anecdote that he sat with President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and

accused him of "imposing an economic blockade against Colombia like the US blockade against Cuba" (relations between Venezuela and Colombia are strained since 'drone' spy planes and paramilitary incursions into Venezuela have been proved).

A senior aide quietly took President Uribe aside and gently explained that economic relations between Venezuela and Colombia had increased threefold since Hugo Chavez came to power. The transactions run into billions of US dollars.

Hugo Chavez politely reminded the Colombian President that the 'Bloc' party was about Latin American Unity.

Travails in Mexico

by Terry Beltrame

My, how Destiny plays with us all – if you believe in a destiny as I do. I departed our beloved village of Nimbin on 6th October with an itinerary to return on 22nd November, my intention being to return here for all the good stuff that starts happening around that time. I finally made it home on 7th February, and this first column of my experiences in Mexico is the beginning gist of a tale.

As this story evolves, take note all and any of you who have ANY criminal record, including a DUI (PCA) or other. This tale begins with a robbery at a bus station in San Cristobal de Las Casas, in the extraordinarily beautiful south of Mexico, where I lost my passport, cash, travellers cheques and other sundry travel documentation. Having only a bus ticket in my pocket to Mexico city to catch my flight in two days time, I had to take the bus without remaining there to file a theft report.

Police in Mexico do not make reports; this is the job of a notary who then submits the report to the police, if warranted. A victim is strongly discouraged by the notary to initiate any investigation by the police, as this will involve many hours of interviews and investigation on the part of the police who have to appear to be doing something about the issue. A police investigation may result in an interview at your hotel which may result in the discovery of illicit drugs in your room.

This then puts the onus back on the victim requiring court appearances or bribes to settle the matter. Despite the tonnes of stuff being trafficked through the country, a possession charge can be anywhere between three months and seven years in jail, if convicted.

So I catch the bus to Mexico City so as to not forfeit my fare (I didn't have sufficient cash in my pocket to purchase another). The Australian Embassy in Mexico City,

(wonderful, helpful people), issued me with an Emergency Passport and after several attempts to secure an interview with the US Embassy to secure a transit visa back home, I was finally advised that the US Embassy refuses to issue a visa **under any circumstances** to Australians requesting same if the application is made in Mexico and not in Australia.

Now, when I first applied for entry into the US for purposes of travel to Mexico I had to complete an internet application requesting permission for travel via the US. One of the questions asked in the application was "Have you ever committed an offence resulting in a criminal conviction?" I answered in the affirmative and was sent an email refusing entry. I phoned the US Embassy in Canberra to explain my circumstances (the offence being a PCA conviction and not personal or property damage) and requested assistance. The respondent advised "Lie". So I reapplied and was granted the appropriate documentation for travel via the USA. This documentation was lost during the course of my theft in San Cristobal.

The Australian Embassy will not issue an applicant with a "full passport" once the original has been lost or stolen. They issue the applicant with an "Emergency Passport" which then requires a full and detailed application for a complete tourist visa for entry into the US. Hence the need to make a new and fully detailed/cross checked visa application to the US for entry regardless of transit or visitor status. The Australian Embassy made representations on my behalf and we managed to get an interview with the US Vice Consul regarding my circumstances and hopefully obtain a transit visa to enter the US via Los Angeles and so, onto Australia.

An Embassy official escorted me to the US Embassy and we were fast tracked through a line of over 500 people applying for US entry visas and onto an appointment with the Vice Consul.

One of the questions asked was whether I'd ever been arrested by the police or had a criminal record. Being of an honest disposition and knowing that all computers are cross

linked, I answered in the affirmative to a PCA conviction two years ago.

When the Vice Consul returned following a short absence, I was informed that as I was a criminal and therefore could not enter the US. I could go to Juarez, a city on the southern border of USA/Mexico and subject to an interview with a government approved doctor who may, or may not, determine I was no longer an "alcoholic" and therefore a threat to the people of the USA.

This process would take approximately three months and a few thousand kilometres of travel, all at considerable expense to myself – and I had no money to spare.

We left the Embassy and when I asked my consort what was my next option she advised that I could either travel via Santiago, Chile at a cost of \$4500, via San Paulo, Brazil to Dubai and then to Sydney at a cost of \$6500 or via Canada and then to Sydney at a cost of \$3000. I was advised that the latter was possibly my best option based on cost and that Canada does not require a visa for Australian visitors.

Terry's tale of woe will be continued next month.

