




Nimbin MardiGrass


1ST+2ND MAY 2010 *CANNABIS LAW REFORM RALLY AND GATHERING*

Nimbin GoodTimes Souvenir Liftout

In the end, everyone's success

by Michael Balderstone
from the MardiGrass Organising Body

The 18th MardiGrass was again a wonderful weekend for thousands of people, despite a significant police presence on the roads, including two Winnebagos where drug testing was being undertaken, plus sniffer dogs at Goolmangar.

This certainly turned a lot of people off the idea of attending the Rally on the Sunday, which was unfortunate. However, in the village itself, the police were much more reasonable than the last few years.

Yes there was a definite chance of rain, and it was a real concern. It would have been a disaster for many stallholders who invest a lot of money in perishable food, as well as for MOB who have to outlay an ever increasing amount of money to satisfy regulations and infrastructure.

Even without the appearance of rain, several of the stalls still had considerable wastage. Sunday's crowd was down on that of recent years and more and more, MardiGrass is getting all-weekend campers, as it's becoming an annual gathering of fans of cannabis from all over Australia and the world.

However I was very positive regarding the overall policing of the event. Despite their inflated numbers, the tenor of the policing was much better than it has been in recent years. This was reflected in fewer arrests and a much happier event. And more significantly, it has gone a long way towards bringing back some respect for the authorities amongst the event organisers and those attending. This



The Bong Babes

sensible policing style was commented on by a lot of people. And who knows? Maybe this is the start of a more mature relationship between event organisers and the police?"

One tragedy clouded the festivities. A fatal accident on the Kyogle road on the Saturday night was tragic in many respects; most especially for the family and friends of Dennis Whittaker, yet also for all the people who agree it's a good thing for the young people to get out of the village after midnight.

James Moylan, the Convenor of the Civil Liberties Observer Group who attended the event, said, "It has marred an otherwise excellent and peaceful event."

One highlight was a speech by Dr Bob Melamede from America, an exceptional speaker who entertained a large and enthusiastic Peace Park crowd talking about recent changes in legislation relating to medical cannabis in his country and indicating a gathering momentum behind a huge shift in attitude. Amongst many interesting observations, he indicated that cannabinoids are a natural part of the human constitution and babies get a big dose as soon as they suck on the breast. "It's perfect for them to relax after the trauma of birth, they sleep and then they get the munchies," he said.

The Hemp Olympix Bong Throwing

World record was broken with a throw of 51.5 metres and the French competitors dominated the Joint Rolling finals, giving Bob the Builder real competition. There is no doubting however that Bob is still the fastest joint roller in the Southern Hemisphere as he added another gold to his poolroom collection in the final again.

Again, it is the extraordinary collection of humans who live here in the community of Nimbin that shines brightest for me at MardiGrass. Hundreds of locals are involved before, during, and after the weekend, in a team effort that few communities so diverse would ever achieve. Heidi Glover and her Jungle Patrol crew is a classic example. She actually put in months of preparation, which totally paid off over the weekend – if only we were all so well organised. The overseas backpacker volunteers are equally important. Working with them is a rich experience for many of us.

Next year will be different!!! There may be a skatepark in Peace Park and especially in the areas of accommodation and parking improvements need to be made. Within a couple of weeks organisers and relevant parties will meet together to learn from the weekend for next year. No doubt it will all happen again, and it's guaranteed that we will be closer to cannabis law reform than ever by April 30th and May 1st 2011. Organisers are now planning for the Big Joint's mission to Canberra in June for a Joint Session with President Obama and Kevin Rudd.

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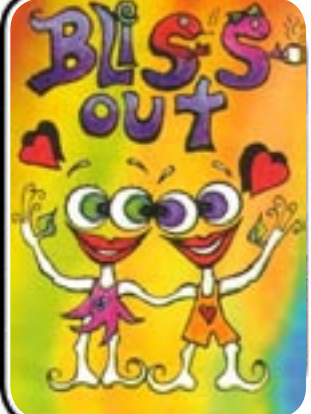
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A BIG THANKYOU FROM THE MARDIGRASS ORGANISERS TO THE VILLAGE OF NIMBIN

The mardigrass organising body extends a big Thank-you to the people of the village of Nimbin for their support and tolerance over the big weekend.

We apologise for those things that did not work well, and hope the number of things that went really well will allow those affected to forgive us and help us work out a solution to problems like the parking and traffic chaos that occurred in Thorburn and Cecil Streets. We especially apologise to residents of those streets for the difficulties with problem parkers.

We try to do better each year, and each MardiGrass has thrown up new challenges for us. Our small band of dedicated local volunteers, aided by volunteers from all over the world, did their best to cope, and did a fantastic job under the circumstances. We want to thank all of those volunteers for missing so much of the festival in order to help us make it happen.

Our thanks to the Festival Volunteers, Jungle Patrol, Musicians and Performing Artists.

Finally, our thanks to all those brave souls who came despite the roadblocks, the dogs, the searches and all the rest to fill our streets and make a statement about the law, the way it is enforced, and the social damage it causes.

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!



Nimbin MardiGrass 2010



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Thanks

This pictorial liftout was made possible by these photographers: Marie Cameron, Peter Chaplin, Dave Christmas, Tom Collet, Rikki Fisher, Warwick Fry, David Hancock, Chris Harris, Mac Macmahon, Garry Mimlich, Liam Robinson, Michael Smith, Andrew Speers, Guy Stewart, Jacqueline Stewart, Sue Stock, Nikki Turner, Deborah Wild. Their skills, effort and generosity are greatly appreciated.



Winners

Winners of the GoodTimes Photographic Competition are: Nikki Turner (ariel shots) and Garry Mimlich (parade pics). They each receive \$50. Two runners up were also selected: Rikki Fisher (special effects) and Liam Robinson (portraits), who will each receive \$25 each. Thanks for all the brilliant entries.

**Next MardiGrass:
30th April & 1st May, 2011**

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