Back Alley Gallery

The Back Alley Gallery project, which started in 2011, has seen laneways of Lismore change from bland, dull brick walls to lively works of art. Now, the artists are looking to put Lismore and their art on the silver screen in a short film to be used in film festivals, online, cinemas and more. The Back Alley Gallery creators have embarked on a campaign to raise the funds needed to make the documentary happen – and they need as much help as they can get. There is $3000 needed from the community in two months to get the short film created.

Creator of the Back Alley Gallery project, Nathan Eyres said initially a documentary wasn’t on the horizon but it seemed to make sense after people seemed so interested in photographing and filming their progress.

"Lismore people have been so supportive of the project, this is a great way to bring the world into what is happening in Lismore," he said.

The first two stages of the project included artists from Lismore, Nimbin, Byron Bay and Brisbane, as well as international artists who came from as far as Germany. Katie O’Rourke, Lismore City Centre Manager, who has been involved with the project from the beginning, explained they are sourcing corporate sponsorship to go alongside funding allocated from the Lismore Business Promotion Panel, but for the documentary to really go ahead, they need the public to pledge their support.

"We are using an online platform called Pepple, which is a crowdsourcing tool," Ms O’Rourke said. The link to donate is: www.pepple.com/thebackalleygallery where you can also view a trailer for the doco.

People can also donate by visiting the Lismore City Council CBD office at 55 Magellans Street. "Each donation over $20 will get to have a piece of the Back Alley Gallery in some form, and know that they have contributed to the film themselves," Ms O’Rourke said.

The third stage of the Back Alley Gallery will commence on 25th and 26th August, with a street party and demonstrations. For more information, go to www.facebook.com/backalleygallery

Artist at left: Back

"Homestead" by Gareth Lindsay Deakin

started in November 2006 by a small group of local artists, is dedicated to promoting the artistic culture of the Northern Rivers region through community arts projects and regional promotion. Known as a gallery that encourages artists to engage in freedom of expression in their arts practice, Lismore’s Serpentine gallery has an active and dynamic annual calendar of exhibitions and performances.

Similar to the Serpentine, Blue Knob Gallery is a membership-based group incorporated as a volunteer association. Its major aim is to promote the awareness and appreciation of art within the community and to visitors, and to foster professional art practice. Housed in the Blue Knob Hall and with a Cafe offering lunches Thursday to Sunday, Blue Knob Gallery is also dedicated to completing the refurbishment of the hall building. The multi-staged plan includes workshop space where artists can provide training and skill-sharing, or attend workshops offered by invited artists, as well as extensions to the cafe space.

A joint initiative between Kyogle Council and Kyogle and District Arts Council, the Roxy Gallery aims to provide local and regional artists with a professionally managed exhibition space, and to provide the community with a cultural space where they can engage in contemporary art, resources and information. The Roxy Gallery, situated at 143 Summerland Way, Kyogle, holds 12 ever-changing exhibitions a year that support and promote cultural diversity in the creative fields.

For more info: www.serpentinearts.org

www.blueknobgallery.com

Nimbin Artists Gallery

by Peter P.

Wanting to escape the cacophony of Callan Street? I’m not sure which is worse, the Council upgrading the drainage or the delicate art of conversation as practised by some of our community during vigorous social intercourse.

If you visit the Nimbin Artists Gallery however, your aural senses will be serenaded by sweet sounds, guaranteed to enhance the visual delights you’ll find within. Depending on who’s behind the desk on the day, the music will be as diverse as classical, jazz, whatever’s on NFM at the time or, if it’s me, probably some blues (the other members won’t let me play Black Sabbath anymore).

A young German backpacker once asked me an afternoon when the Teutons had taken over Nim-FM, if I understood German. “Aachh, they’re everywhere,” I replied.

At our most recent hanging we were very pleased to receive work from Harami Hayahay (mixed media) and Gery Mews (watercolour). I don’t believe either of these artists have displayed in the gallery during recent times and their work looks fabulous. Suzanne Walden has new felted vests and Sandra Jonan, Denis Meagher, Roslyn Parry, Kach Perrrott and Emma Polerti-Cook all have new work hanging. Or just come listen to some music.
Last May, I hopped on the train in Berwick-on-Tweed, south of Edinburgh and traveled five hours north to the carbon neutral eco village of Findhorn. I had read about Findhorn in the ’70s and was interested to find out what it was like now. The train traveled past the Turriff nuclear power station (I’d never seen one before), past golfers putting away on golf courses precariously on the edge of huge cliffs, past wonderful coastal scenery, passing through the cities of Dundee and Aberdeen on the way, to the little station of Forres near Findhorn.

Findhorn is a spiritual community, an ecovillage, a transition town and a centre for holistic education. It is one of the largest intentional communities in the UK. It also houses about 40 community businesses such as the Findhorn Press, a bakery, pottery, Findhorn Flower Essences, Trees For Life, a Steiner school and an alternative medicine centre and operates a LETS system which allows trade in goods and services without the use of money.

Findhorn was started by Eileen Caddy, her husband Peter and Dorothy Maclean in 1962 and is now home to 400 residents and visited by thousands of people each year. It is based on the interconnectedness of life and cooperation with nature. The community has developed as a place where spiritual principles common to all religions and with no doctrine or creed are put into action in everyday life. The Findhorn Foundation runs many courses in spiritual practice, nature and ecology, permaculture, sustainability, creative arts, and much more in a very beautiful way. This year, they are celebrating their 50th birthday.

Findhorn’s residents are proud of the fact that they have the lowest measured ecological footprint of any community in the developed world, and also half of the UK average. It is a founder member of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) a non-profit organisation that links together a diverse worldwide movement of autonomous ecovillages and related projects. The Findhorn Foundation Ecovillage Project has received Best Practice designation from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

Within this ecovillage, sustainable values are expressed in the built environment with ecological houses, innovative use of building materials such as local stone and straw bales and houses made from recycled whisky barrels (pictures). I stayed in a very comfortable straw bale house there. There is a comprehensive building code that all new buildings are required to meet. This includes features such as very efficient insulation, double glazing, non-toxic organic paints, wood preservatives manufactured without the use of toxic glues or resins and roofing with natural clay tiles. Many houses do not even need heating in winter. Shared facilities such as laundry, kitchens, etc. are encouraged, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication. Bicycles are everywhere. The ecological sewage treatment system was put in place in 1995. Here grey water and sewage run through a series of tanks, containing plants and bacteria that break down the waste without the use of chemicals.

I saw wonderful vegetable gardens (with unusually friendly birds) that provide more than 70% of the community’s fresh food requirements. These are supplied with vast amounts of compost from local organic farms where animals are housed in large sheds during the freezing winter. The residents see their gardens and the community as a microcosm of the larger world. How they interact with the land and soil always has a ritual aspect where they are trying to invoke kinder, more sensitive and more attuned ways of working with the Earth. When they have to trim a hedge they do what needs doing in the kindest way possible and in a way that allows them to be in touch with the living plants, so by hand and with secateurs, not machinery.

Findhorn people talked about work as love in action. At the start of any Findhorn work shift, there’s an attunement: the work team join hands, connect with the purpose of the task, and ask to be guided to do it well. At the end of the shift people gathered together for a chat and a cuppa and scones with lovely home-made jam.

I was interested in the four wind turbines. They were decorated Nimbin-style with paintings (pictures) and it was interesting to stand underneath and hear how silent they were. Much of the electricity is used onsite through their private grid as well as export to the national grid. I would like to thank former Byron resident, Carin and Christine from Findhorn’s Communications Unit who answered my many questions and also former Tuntable resident Graham Meltzer (picture) who expressed his joy at living in Findhorn. Graham gave me a copy of his book Sustainable Community: Learning from the cohousing model.

"No matter where people live on the earth, when they focus on this vision of community equality and long term sustainability rather than on wealth or personal financial security, they evolve similar management methods and attitudes that create much healthier and more stable societies. The new precepts for living, that are developing not only are increasing our chances for survival, they have an unexpected dividend; they are helping to discover very deep forms of satisfaction and joy.”

For more information about Findhorn, visit www.findhorn.org
Local government elections will be held on 8th September. Councils are the closest level of government to daily living, including environmental protection and sustainability which is valued so highly in the Northern Rivers.

Under the NSW Local Government Act (1993), a council is required: To properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is sustainable with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

The Act also requires a council to produce an annual State of the Environment (SoE) reports. This year, North Coast councils will join forces and in conjunction with the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and relevant State agencies, will produce the first Northern Rivers regional SoE report (2011-2012). Under the recently released planning Green Paper with its Regional Growth Plans, Subregional Delivery Plans, Local Land Use Plans (and community acceptance of them via a Public Participation Charter) become law, the three main legislative requirements for councils relating to koala protection are the Local Government Act 1993, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 44, Koala Habitat Protection.

The importance of elected representatives in effective environmental stewardship cannot be underestimated as has been demonstrated by the pleasant progress made since the SEPP 44 Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management across the region since 2008. Lismore City Council has already adopted a plan for South East Lismore which is with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure for signing-off. Tweed and Byron are engaged in a similar process. The Ballina has resolved to prepare a plan. Friends of the Koala is again keen to assist in preparing a draft that can be considered over the term of the new Councils elected in September. In the next few weeks, we will put to each candidate standing for election in the Northern Rivers, the following questions related to koala conservation and management in the region. Responses will be assessed for their koala-friendliness and published on our website, Facebook page and in the media. Watch this space. But while we are encouraged that koala conservation is gaining traction with local government, on the ground we continue to lose animals as an alarming pace. The last five weeks of our reporting year, to 30 June, were disastrous with 26 mortalities. Eleven animals required euthanasing. Nearly half succumbed to disease. Road hit and dog attack were the next main causes.

On a happier note, public art has long played a role in promoting and articulating community interests, values and aspirations. Over the past couple of months Friends of the Koala has benefitted from the passion of Lismore-based indigenous artist, Karla Dickens for koalas and for our koala conservation endeavours.

Karla has been commissioned by Woolworths to create the 18 x 6m installation featured on the wall of its new store in Goonellabah. Her work is a stylized,boldly-coloured depiction of a koala and gum leaves which incorporates recycled fabric. She has titled it, Dreaming of a Koala Haven. Digitized, enlarged and printed onto large photographic panels, the mural overlooks the aquatic centre and skateboard park.

Karla loves koalas and came up with the idea of auctioning the original artwork with half the proceeds going to Friends of the Koala. Being a ‘can-do’ type of woman, she has since grown that idea into an online silent auction involving donated works by 20 other artists. The online auction will run through August and September. Check out what is on offer at: http://eightcollective.com/endanger/silent-art-auction-for-the-koalas

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline on 6622 1233. This number can also be used for information about koalas, their food trees, and other ways in which you can assist the koala conservation effort on the Northern Rivers. Also visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email info@friendsofthekoala.org or follow us on Facebook.

To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat, phone the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 13-15-55. Until next time, happy koala spotting.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

by Richard Burer

Quick close the window here comes balloon vine, climbing through as the warmth of spring and summer help it spread its tendrils onto the house and garden, but mostly over the native vegetation of our beautiful waterways and forest edges. This exotic climber is a very common invasive species in the Nimbin area, it can be seen just about anywhere in the valley where this vine has smothered and covered over and over and slowly degraded native trees along our creeks and roadsides. Flowering in spring the fruit becomes an inflated balloon shaped capsule, papyri with a fairly hard black seed. Then on maturity, wind and water spread it along creeks and forest edges where its massive growth rates soon start to degrade remnant vegetation.

While it would be good if all the basket weavers had their festivals in Nimbin and focused their attention on koala conservation and other approaches might be needed if you’re thinking that balloon vine is detrimental to the environment. If vine weeds are threatening your creek bank and you live on Goolmangar

Balloon vine Cardiospermum grandiflorum
creek there is an opportunity to be part of current project controlling exotic vine weeds. Nimbin Rocks Co-operative Landcare Group has received funding from the NSW Environmental Trust to control vine weeds, including balloon vine, cats claw creeper and madura vine.

They are hosting a workshop on Friday the 31st August from 9.30 am to 11 am at the Nimbin Rocks Co-operative Landcare site. Come along and hear about the project, there will be vine weed control demonstrations and an opportunity for attendees, if you have land along Goolmangar Creek, to have a professional bush regenerator work with you on your site to provide practical support with the control of these invasive species.

For more information and to register contact Georgina Jones at EnvirTE Environment on 6621-9588 or georgina@envirte.org.au Bookings essential.
The rainforest stretched from rainforest, rich in cedar and biomass. This helps make the largest biomass, has the richest biodiversity of all ecosystems. This means it has the greatest number of different species existing together in the one area. The rainforest encompasses a wider or more wholistic view of causes and effects, so one can reasonably expect it is because immune systems are not a natural consequence of this, and, that dysfunctionality may have many species of trees that are not conducive to the farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds species, rather than that there will be a gradual evolution of the weed capital of Australia. Many Ironbarks on Lillifield community for example, may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds species, rather than that there will be a gradual evolution of the weed capital of Australia. Many Ironbarks on Lillifield community for example, may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds species, rather than that there will be a gradual evolution of the weed capital of Australia. Many Ironbarks on Lillifield community for example, may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds species, rather than that there will be a gradual evolution of the weed capital of Australia. Many Ironbarks on Lillifield community for example, may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps. One can conceive that Lillyfield in future may yet die before a new balance is struck with the bellbirds that farm the lerps.
GreenBank up and running

The Green Bank girls, Kylie, Lishia and Rebecca, would like to extend our thanks to our many supporters. Our new venture was officially opened in June as a roaring success, with friends, family and well-wishers enjoying delicious food prepared by our favourite caterers at the Grapevine Café, music by the divine Andrea Soler and Elvis, and the great vibes that always accompany any event coordinated by the wonderful Cat Anderson.

Our new venture was officially opened by Lismore mayor Jenny Dowell, and we would like to express our gratitude to her too, for coming out to Nimbin, and her kind words of encouragement.

We've had a terrific first few months of trading, and continue to grow and respond to the needs of our customers. We've enjoyed the feedback from locals and tourists alike, and we are always interested in hearing of products you'd like to see in the shop. Nimbin's own Naturally Nourished and Tea Medica continue to expand their ranges, and all the talented felters, woodworkers, toy makers and assorted artisans are slowly but surely coming out of hibernation to the hills to share their work with you through our shop.

So, if you haven't already, please drop in and see what we've created. And if you've already been here, please come again! We're no doubt changed it all around since you were last in.

by Beth Shelley

There's a part of all of us that knows what it feels like to be alone in the world and to have no one who cares. A few years back I was working for a housing service when a colleague, John, and I went to help an man sign a lease. Dave had been on the streets since he was 12 years old and in juvenile detention or gaol on and off for most of his life. He'd just been released and offered a year's accommodation in a DOH property to help him get on his feet.

I'd worked with Aboriginal men in his situation before and found that, while they might seem tough on the surface, when offered support these men would often soften.

So I didn't feel any fear when I met Dave, even though he had that intense look about him. When I met Dave, even though he had that intense look about him.

He was a volunteer at Vinnies, had paid his rent, had no complaints and was keeping the place spotless. John told me that he and a female support worker from the gaol had arranged to go and see him for his 40th birthday. They had decided to get him a card and some chocolates. “We just want him to know we think he's doing well,” John said.

“His pretty distant with his issue up until recently,” he added. "But he's got okay with me now. Although one time I turned around without knowing him and he got a bit scary. He was like, 'What? You're kicking me out?'

And I said 'No, nothing like that,' and he's been okay with me since then.

“But I’m going to have to tell him he’s only got six months left and he has to start looking for another place.”

Later I asked John what happened. “We got him a card and wrote what we thought about how well he was doing and gave him some chocolates,” John said. “When he looked at the card he put his head down and started wiping his eyes. He was wiping away tears.”

“Oh,” I said. "Maybe he’s never had a birthday card in his whole life.”

John said that the support worker had given Dave a bit of a hug and then he and Dave had given each other a bear hug and Dave was thanking him.

“I told him, ‘I’ll do whatever I can to help you man,’ and the thing is I just feel that way, I just want to do whatever I can to help him get another place.”

“I said, ‘That’s great because he’s unlikely to get a place in the private rental market because he’s Aboriginal. If you help him at least he has that chance,”

For people who lost their family early or have known nothing but the gaol, it can be hard to know that life can be any different from what they’re known. When they feel cared about even for a moment it can change the world.

and the words we use can have myriad meanings. A workshop I recently attended explored the many ways we use to describe vaginas and yonis. Some build respect and a sense of awe whilst others, like ‘downstairis’, can manifest confusion.

This three-day workshop called Creative Ways of Making Space for the Baby was well described. It was as it sounds. Jenny Blyth and Fiona Hallinan helped us understand the mechanics of birth. It was enlightening to see and feel how our bones, muscles and ligaments soften and open to allow a baby to be birthed.

I have been exploring topics about pregnancy and birth for around five years now. My awareness has deepened and my respect grown. I am honoured to be able to help people prepare for this profound rite of passage. The workshops I run are based on Birthing From Within and aim to help people to learn to trust their intuition. The processes help women to discover and validate what they already know and help them prepare to birth from within.

Unfortunately, much of the media portrayal dramatises birth, and TV shows like One Born Every Minute can be damaging to the young. These shows tend to normalise the medicalisation of this event and make people doubt their abilities to give birth without drugs and intervention. Instead of seeing birth as SACRED, they grow up being SCARED.

by Birrah Holburn

B. ClSc (complementary medicine)
Traditional Wisdom

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Love
by Zuela Christie

PART 2: SELF – LOVE

Love is your original nature. We are not only felt to be loved and connected. The rules of scarcity of the external material world do not apply to Love. The more freely we give Love, the more we have to give. The very inner wealth of Love belongs equally to us all.

No-one is more deserving of Love than you and no-one is less. Love mends broken hearts.

Before you were born, you existed in a merged oceanic state of all-encompassing cosmic oneness. There were no boundaries and no separateness. This is where our drive comes from for union and Love, in the memory of this original bliss.

Within a few short years, whether your parents were well-intended or grossly dysfunctional, we are all compelled to close down parts of ourselves, to move away from Spirit and re-create the situation that led to the need for the parents love and their attention exclusively focused on the outer drama. When we blame or judge another, we are usually projecting some hidden and disliked part of ourselves onto them. They are like a blank sheet onto which we project a slide of our inner fears, so that we have something to hate that things in others that we have repressed in ourselves. Thus we do not have to look inwards.

As well, the drive within to hide the profound grief of loss of Self. To do this we create a conflict which will usually cause us to make contrary decisions held in opposition to one another – such as wanting to hide from a hurtful parent yet yearning to be found and loved by them. These tensions are formed automatically for every major attachment or rejection causes its opposite to arise within the psyche.

We do this everyday, and if we could remain conscious we would form and dissolve and re-form like breathing. But when we are not conscious, one aspect seems darker and gets hidden so we are only aware of it in ourselves. When we have looked onto some energy in passing, such as suffering; then whenever we are offered suffering we will continue to hold onto it – growing the complex. Instead of letting the feeling flow through and away, it becomes dammed up inside, constantly replenishing us with more and more suffering.

As adult life, the child within is a psychic reality. Most adult lives are to some extent conditioned by the traumas and imprinting of childhood. This childhood drapes daily life to recreate the situation that led to being hurt – such is the attachment to hold onto and approval that the child will go on trying desperately to reproduce the childhood situation so they can correct it and overcome it. The paradox is that you also preserve the situation to prove you could not have overcome it, because to do so would expose your real powerlessness and vulnerability.

We are all effectively stuck in our own war-ravaged version of Groundhog Day. The childhood within has established a certain, if precarious comfort level from which they believe that nobody, sometime will come to rescue and love them. Our tragedy is that our present happiness is constantly frustrated by our child’s strategy. The way to rectify this is to trace a current problem back until it reawakens the original childhood hurt so that the energy can be cleared. Healing occurs when the adult separates from the child so the light of consciousness can then be shone onto the situation to create the opportunity for resolution. The great benefit of unearthing the true nature of the child is the possibility of releasing creativity, fun, beingness, spontaneity, and the restoration of the flow of Love.

Zuela Christie is a Polarity Energy Balancer working at the Green Bank. This modality works with the energy of unconditional Love to bring people closer to the free flow of Love simultaneously on the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels to restore the blueprint of our original energy.

Evocations
by Dr Elizabeth McCardell M counselling, PhD.

Not so long ago a friend came to visit for the first time and commented on the near absence of photographs in my house and wondered aloud whether perhaps I had something to hide. It is replied that for sure, I had few photos, but that did not mean my house is empty of presence. I am surrounded by gifts from friends and family and all the gifts are rich with stories. Indeed, I am a multi-narratived house.

There are the ornamental treasures chosen by an old friend and her daughter, each painted differently. There is the carapace of a large black beetle. I have in my possession a dowry feather given by another loved friend who knows my delight in the natural world. A small orange glass bottle from a woman with whom I have befriended this last year, which I still feel under pressure as hard liquid and solid, a substance moulten glass – at once twisting them into fabulous shapes, the wizardry of molten glass – at once liquid and solid, a substance that can be shaped but shifts in the air, it is a multi-narratived dwelling. A multi-storied house.

The gifts that surround me are rich in story. My red vase is not just a vase. It speaks of Norwegian birch trees in winter, it hearkens silence and close listening, of strength and fragility. The giver of the vase is a very talented counsellor who works with parents of sudden infant death syndrome children, listening closely to their fragile presence.

The black bee and feather came to me from a dear friend for whom the connection with the natural world is a deeply spiritual one, something we share. Together we have worked on polishing her first novel, a book in which the voices of people and words intermingle with the deep voice of rock, water, air and tw.

We are all multi-storied beings. There is nothing within us nor around us that has a single strand of meaning and thus no single line of interpretation and misinterpretation (for we do not always get it right). No single story means we have to engage the complexity of possible ways to respond to the same thing. A glass bottle evokes in me memories of hours spent in the back shed at home (I was about 15 at the time) working over a Bunsen burner with pieces of glass, melting and twisting them into fabulous shapes. The wizardry of molten glass – at once liquid and solid, a substance that could be shaped but felt under pressure as hard – mesmerized me. The orange glass bottle given by a former colleague contains for me these two contradictory emotions of hardness and softness, of resistance and fluidity, of dislike and like. The coloured glass parallels the red/orange of my colleague’s hair, and so on.

Our capacity for evocation means that everything we encounter bring us into the therapeutic space to multiply of songs upon the breath of pain, according to our feelings and memories and ancient and not so ancient embodied experiences.

The fluidity and resistance to what is brought can be shaped into new ways of seeing. There is always that possibility. Sometimes the old way of seeing ourselves and our relation with others dominates and dominates and seems resistant to change, but with support and challenge (and this is what I offer my clients, as a glass worker provides the alchemical substance of glass), shifts in awareness and understanding can begin.

I saw a client recently who had a history of sexual abuse while growing up. He had been assured, he was fluid in his movement, her face was relaxed and rested (she’d suffered years of insomnia), and he said that he thought this would be her last session I felt the two conflicting emotions of “I’ll miss you,” and “Yes, it is right, this is the ripe time to complete this work, at least for now.” It is a multi-narrative gift for me when a person remains as a part of me, even after the therapy is done at some time. Being a person is being a meld of old accounts of being easily evoked in the presence of others. It is a drive towards health, balance, and hope.