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Gallery ready for seasonal visitors

by Gigi Warne

Christmas is almost upon us, another year has almost gone. It's time to be with family and friends to rejoice and have a good time. Many people will choose to come and visit Nimbin and its unique atmosphere and charm. The village is teeming with holidaymakers at this time.

Nimbin Artists Gallery will be open to welcome as usual the visitors. They will be delighted to see the quality of art exhibited in the gallery.

They are always astonished to see such vibrant artistic talents being represented in this little village of world fame, where they can choose from a simple hand-made postcard to a sculpture or painting, glassware, pottery, ceramics, weaving, stunning photographs, exquisite jewellery and even wearable art. All made here.

Locals have always also been fervent patrons of the gallery. Many select presents for friends, family and loved ones – mind you it does not



And She Was by Joanna May



have to be Christmas – and there is always something of interest and beauty. All this is offered at a very affordable price, because the gallery is run by a team of

volunteers who love to support the arts, and who will always welcome you: Rod, Pauline, Peter P, Wendy, Fay, Melissa, Liz, Gigi, Tim, Peter W, and Edith. Visit our website: www.nimbinartistsgallery.org for a list of all our artists and what they have to offer. Have a lovely festive season, exciting and safe holidays or family reunions.



Winter Twilight by Ian FitzSimon



Serpentine by Sue Boardman

This annual show at Blue Knob Hall Gallery enables the artists to exhibit whatever they choose, in any medium without a theme to work from.

It is a popular show as it brings out a greater variety of work and showcases the wonderful talent and diversity of the artists in this region who continue to support this community gallery. The exhibition will run until the end of Jan 2014.

It has been a big year for Blue Knob Hall Gallery & Cafe, with the new

ceramic studio being built to lock up stage, and all the hard work by members and volunteers has achieved so much.

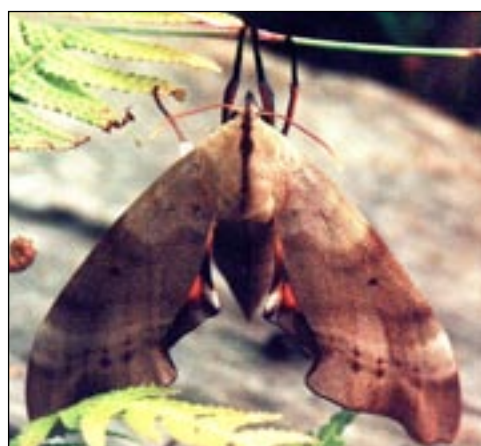
We look forward to the new year and another concerted effort to getting this great studio space up and running.

There is no artists and friends lunch or silver service Sunday scheduled for December, but we will let you know in the new year when these popular lunches will start again.

Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Cafe will

be closed over the Christmas and new year period from Mon 23rd December, re-opening Thurs 9th January. During that period, the Gallery & Cafe will be opening for two mornings only until 1pm on Sat 28th December and Sat 4th January during the Blue Knob Farmers Market.

On behalf of all of us here at Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Cafe, we would like to wish you all an enjoyable Christmas and a great start to the new year.



Nosin' Around

with PAC

The photo of the moth (left), which is probably a vine hawk, was taken long ago in the forest somewhere around the area but I can't remember where now. But I do know it was quite a large one.

The other photo was taken in late November and I wonder how long it will take to replace the sign. I hope they don't, because it is unique



now. I remember the last one was attacked and broken off, so this one replaced it earlier this year.

Leigh's mastery of symmetry and illusion

Leigh Arnold (pictured) is a Lismore-based artist who explores illusion, but without reference to our immediate, physical world.

His work will be on display upstairs at the Lismore Regional Gallery from 7th December to 2nd February 2014.

When the viewer looks at his paintings, there is an impression of movement: of swelling, warping and vibration due to Leigh's intricate patterns which trick and delight the eye.

The works come to life further with the optional use of 3D glasses, which extends them into an unexpected place of fun and wonder.

The practice of art has been life-changing for Leigh, who has struggled with dyslexia throughout his life. When he discovered art he came to understand how his mind works, and to see that his dyslexia is a gift which enables him to interpret the world with a unique vision.

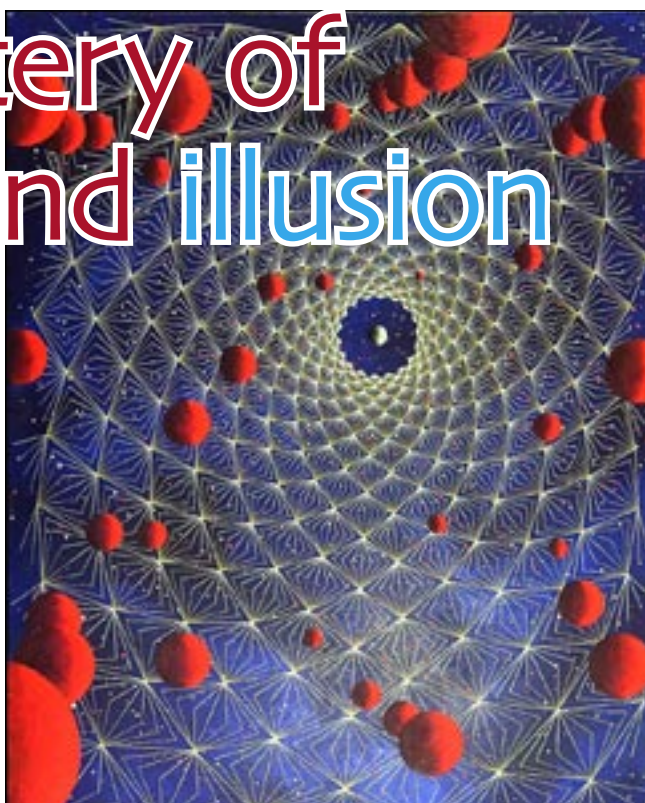
"My 50th birthday present



was to find out why literacy had been such a struggle," he said. "I discovered that I am severely dyslexic and have Asperger's and an IQ so high it is hard to measure accurately. It was good to know at least!"

Most of his works have a scientific base. They illustrate perspective, space-bending, gravity, the Big Bang, galaxies, and use quantum physics, Euclidean geometry, and, above all, symmetry.

"I use colour to illustrate change over time," he said, "with cooler colours dropping back and warmer colours



Deep Space 2013, acrylic and enamel ink on canvas

coming forward. This automatically produces 3D effects."

Some of his images have been reproduced in a mathematical text on symmetry for use worldwide. Other reproductions have been used as covers for science and various other magazines, and as posters for a conference on symmetry held at Melbourne University in 2009. A PBS documentary

on the history of the telescope also used many of his images in 2010.

His work has been sold to clients in Canada, the USA, France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland. He was honoured with an award from the International Astronomy Union for commitment and outstanding contribution to the success of the International Year of Astronomy 2009.



Bundjalung artists with Governor of NSW, Marie Bashir

Art, memory and Bundjalung magic



The Retracing Bundjalung National Park exhibition to be held at Lismore Regional Gallery from 7th December to 2nd February, is one based on personal connections to local landscape.

Drawing together the work of three artists – ceramicist Janet DeBoos (Canberra), painter Christine James (Lismore), and photographer Christopher Meagher (Woodburn) – it examines the close connection all three have with Bundjalung National Park on the coast near Lismore.

While acknowledging the deep connection the people of the Bundjalung and Yaegl nations have had with this land for thousands of years, the artists explore the affinity they, as Anglo-Australians, have developed with it.

Janet DeBoos is one of Australia's leading ceramic artists, but her first experiences with Bundjalung National Park predate her artistic calling.

"I first encountered The Bundjalung National Park during the two decades that my parents owned a motel and restaurant in Evans Head in the 70s and 80s, when Bundjalung was going through the process of being declared a national park," she said.

"Over the last year I have walked back into those parts of the park that are familiar, and I have found I see different things. This is perhaps because I am looking at it as a potter, rather than family member on a holiday, or as a botanist, which was my first profession, before I took up ceramics.

"What I see" when I go there now is a feeling of colour that is very particular. I am transfixed by small flashes of colour in what may sometimes

Fireworks (Banksia regrowth) by Christopher Meagher

be seen as a 'drab' country, as they draw me in to an examination of the beauty of small things."

Christine James, now in her 60s, was a small child when she first visited the park. "My family had a beach cottage at Airforce Beach, Evans Head, during my childhood, where we spent all our weekends and holidays," she said.

"I will always remember, before there was a bridge, my father rowed us, two trips each way, across the river for a long walk on a sandy track. The air was heavy with the honey perfume from the profuse heath, in blossom. Now that track is bitumen."

Christopher Meagher began his relationship with Bundjalung National Park when he was a geologist, which enabled him to see the many layers of that particular landscape.

"The park has so many facets that arise from its Pleistocene history, the advance and retreat of the sea inscribed in the patterns of the dunes, swamps and streams," he said.

"Written upon this are the sometimes subtle, sometimes extreme effects of the season, human use and the bushfires. In 33 years I have seen many changes in the physical and cultural aspects of Bundjalung National Park, and there is still much to learn: the photographic record is integral to this."

Chris was an Associate Lecturer in Photography at Southern Cross University for many years and the exhibition includes photographs taken 10 to 20 years ago which document how the park has changed over time.

Iconic Nimbin business continues to flourish

by Lewis Smart

The history of The Nimbin Craft Gallery dates back to the late 1970's when artist Roger Hopkins built the existing shop to sell local artisans crafts and artworks. The Gallery was officially registered as a business in 1988 and was eventually purchased by Lindy Brown and others in 1998.

The Nimbin Craft Gallery now begins the next chapter of its long history, with a new team and a renewed vision. Linda Collings and Jessica Starr join Lindy Brown as co-owners of the gallery, with plans to build the business while maintaining its dedication to supporting artists and artisans of the local and global communities. All three are united in their love of the arts and crafts, and are excited about the creativity and talent of the people they meet and work with.

Lindy, long term Tuntable Falls resident, achieved the dream of owning a shop after years of running market stalls. She's been making crafts since she was five years old, and has become a diverse artisan, focusing mainly on jewellery and more recently on a range of polymer clay kitchenware. The inspiration and excitement she draws from the creative community is what keeps her going in the business.

Linda created her first outfits at age eleven and later acquired formal training as a seamstress and designer. She established her Lizard Lane fashion label in 1984, and her work can be found in the Nimbin Craft Gallery today. She is also a painter, drawer, and photographer, and very happy to be taking up her position as a facilitator of the creative community in Nimbin.

Jess is a relatively new arrival to Nimbin, but a long time inhabitant of the Rainbow Region. She is glad to be living and working out here now, having



The new team: Jessica Starr, Lindy Brown and Linda Collins.

always loved the area. Jess is amazed and inspired by the local talent and excited to meet local artists. She has a long history as a travel agent, and will now add some creative pursuits to her repertoire.

Nimbin Craft Gallery continues to stock its diverse range of clothing, shoes, hats, jewellery and accessories, leather goods, didgeridoos and indigenous artworks, soaps and shampoos, sculptures, art prints and originals, dyes, wool and other craft supplies, candles, local music, souvenirs, ceramic goods, and other treasures. Ethically sourced goods from Thailand, Laos, PNG and Ecuador are to be found, and new world-craft products are added each year.

Just unpacked is our new range of summer clothing with a fabulous variety of dresses, skirts, blouses and tops in cool cotton fabrics, and a new shipment

of leather bracelets, woven bags and summer scarves from Thailand. And don't miss the beautiful, colourful keyrings made by the hill tribes of Laos.

For the month of December we are offering a 15% discount off all our imported clay items including quirky chooks, owls and other birds; funky pigs, elephants and faces, and an extensive variety of large decorative pots, suitable for inside your home, verandah or garden. Perfect for gift-giving over this festive season!

The commitment to local artists and artisans continues strongly and they are always seeking new consignees and their creative efforts. All craftspeople are invited to drop in and bring their creations. We are open 10am to 5pm, 7 days a week.

Please like our Facebook page: *Nimbin Craft Gallery*.



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Shop GO

The future is home-grown

by Wayne Wadsworth

If it's made from oil, coal and gas (hydrocarbons), it can be made from plants (carbohydrates).

Carbon farming works like this: farmers grows carbon biomass using bamboo, hemp, banana, coconut etc. Carbon biomass is processed into raw materials to replace petrochemical products.

Unloved carbon biomass products are recycled into new shiny products. Non-recycled carbon products are turned into biochar using pyrolysis, which also produces green energy.

Pyrolysis energy is combined with solar thermal, wind and algae fuel to replaces fossil fuels for stationary and automotive power.

Biochar is sequestered into farm soils taking carbon out of the carbon cycle, improving farm soils and creating new wealth for rural communities.

Carbon Farming Centres, small and large, will be designed and built for the purpose of eco-education and direct action, where green technology will be employed to teach people how to quickly move away from oil, coal and gas to solar, wind and biomass.

People will learn how to design and build sustainable integrated systems based on rural and urban carbon farming.

Assistance for small- to medium-sized businesses and social enterprises will be a cornerstone of carbon farming centres. Carbon

farming centres will use a "get well" permaculture design system, integrating the sustainable and renewable use of water, energy and land based on localisation.

The new global economy will be globally digital and locally printable, where carbon farming, education and eco-tourist education will be a major source of shared knowledge, wealth and employment.

And 3D printing technology will vastly change the way we produce and consume goods.

3D printers can produce very simple or very complex and very strong consumer products that can be made at home, at school or locally at your "one stop green shop".

You can produce a robot, a prosthetic hand, a new heart or false teeth with 3D technology.

The feedstock for these printers can come from petrochemical carbon, or farm-grown carbon. Corn starch is currently used in 3D printers. Transportation miles, fossil fuel use and production costs will all fall as a result.

With a little help from 3 D and their friends, poor countries will be able to bypass 200 years of centralised industrial development.

Carbon farming, pyrolysis green energy and sequestering biochar are our best form of reversing greenhouse while maintaining a high standard of physical and social living, so let's carbon-farm bamboo, hemp, banana and coconut.

Black Rock victory for koalas

by Dave Norris

The Tweed Shire Council has decided not to approve a proposal to expand Black Rocks Sports Ground for night sports.

Protestors were concerned for the diminishing local koala population, and packed the gallery at the recent council meeting.

Almost 4000 signed petitions were submitted to the council, and councillors received a flood of emails and letters on the issue.

Protestors were set to take the matter to the Land and Environment Court if necessary, and were investigating options for legal representation.

Councillors did the right thing by declining the proposal, which was put forward by the council itself, and was strongly supported by council staff.

Residents of Black Rocks are particularly pleased with the outcome.

Members of Team Koala and the Black Rocks residents who led the campaign to save our koalas are celebrating.

Journalists and media outlets also deserve praise for their support and assistance in alerting residents to the issue.

It is hoped that future applications will be handled with the same respect for the environment.

Plant of the month

Weeping satinash Waterhousea floribunda

by Richard Burer

Those who frequent our local watercourses will no doubt be familiar with this species, as Waterhousea is particularly dominant along the banks of the upper Tweed River just out of Nimbin.

Graceful, strong and growing to a height of 30m, this tree is excellent to plant in many different locations, as its attractiveness, bushy weeping habit

and mass flowering make it a great landscape, creekside restoration, farm and garden tree.

Those who like to enjoy sitting outdoor at the blister in Nimbin will notice this stunning tree (pictured) in all its flowering glory, as it is in full flower at the moment.

With moderate growth rates, this tree really suits the Blister location. I feel it may not reach 30m in that location, however it will grow to be a largish tree, though it may well be of a smaller form.

To grow your own, pick the pinkish green berry, remove the pulp and sow fresh.



Silent straw bales

The seething siren of cicadas steals the 'esses' from sound. Summer is here, sizing us up for a hot one. The relative cool of the mornings gives respite from the sizzler in the midday. My airy eyrie allows breeze to flow through while I take in the view. Over my shoulder and down the hill, my straw bale home's ochred walls have not yet collected the sun. The eaves hang like steel wings around the walls, keeping them cool and dry. Inside, the night time temperatures preside, and coolness prevails. More than once, on a hot day, visitors have commented on how quiet my air conditioner is. Straw bale is silent indeed. Sometimes, when it gets really hot, I can smell the lime in the render. It smells like a cave, cool and earthy. The only drawback to having a straw bale home is that it is really difficult to

leave when it's hot outside.

I decided to build from straw for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it is incredibly easy. As I am essentially lazy, simplicity speaks to me in volumes. The walls went up in no time and rendering was just slopping mud around. Straw lends itself well to sculpting. My place has curves, bulges and even a face shaped into a straw bale buttress. Secondly, it is very sustainable. Straw, as opposed to hay, is only the stalk of a field crop such as barley or wheat. The flowers have already been harvested for beer and bread etc., so the concept that we can build a house, eat bread and drink beer from the same stuff is amazing. It doesn't need further processing, just bale it up and build it up. Rendering can be done with locally extracted clays, mixed with borax



View from the loo
by Stuart McConville

(fire retardant and rodent deterrent) and chaff. Thirdly, its insulating properties are second to none. Cool in summer, warm in winter, my power consumption for temperature control extends to a few days on the chainsaw to cut wood for an efficient home-made slow combustion fire place. Lastly, it is a very fireproof. After the Victorian bushfires a few years ago, the CSIRO undertook research at the request of an avid straw

bale enthusiast who was sure any new building codes designed to withstand fire should include straw bale. With little or no oxygen inside the walls, there is nothing to burn, and when render is made from earth or lime, it can withstand enormous temperatures. During a test burn on a straw bale structure, outside temperatures reached over 1000 deg C. while inside temperatures peaked at only 35 deg C. This represents a maximum intensity bushfire and a fire front equal to 29Kw per sq. metre, the acceptable standard under the current bushfire code AS3959. I had originally seen pictures of what was left of a house after a wildfire in the US. Only the straw bale part of the structure remained intact. In our area, where many dwellings are surrounded by bushland, I can think of no better life insurance policy than owning a straw bale home.

Earthships sail proudly forth

by Duuvy Jester

We are Terraeden Bioteecture, an environmental building collective.

We build off-grid homes that are heavily inspired by Earthship Bioteecture. Earthships are a habitat design concept that was birthed by the motherdog, renegade architect, Michael Reynolds.

What a wild couple of weeks it has been, like a tornado made of faerie floss and sledgehammers whirling and spinning us all into some warped sense of collective accomplishment.

Earthships are made up of six integrated living systems, using natural and recycled materials, thermal/solar heating and cooling, electricity from renewable resources,

harvested rainwater, food production and on-site sewage treatment.

All of these systems operate symbiotically. This means that the home turns into living and breathing organisms, just like us. Being a design concept, the building can be adapted to any environment, as well as suiting most lifestyle requirements.

We wanted to experiment with a new style of education. Learning in its entirety is what we are going for. From a foundation of heart, communicated through head and expressed through hand.

Many of the people who attended our recent workshop spend most of their time in cities like Melbourne and Sydney. They slipped right into it with ease and grace.

Eating every meal together really helped,

mainly local organic produce that was laid on perfectly.

The saying 'many hands make light work' also applies. There were usually at least five different tasks happening at any one time. This allowed for the speedy erecting of the structure.

Firstly the pad was scratched out and about 200mm of road base was laid before the first layer of tyres. Then a French drain was dug about a foot or two below pad level.

This was lined with geofabric, builders plastic, blue metal, perforated ag pipe, then covered in geofabric to keep it from clogging up when buried. Then the interior floor level was raised by another 300mm or so with more road base, perforated ag pipe that redirects any potential ground water outside, gravel and cracker dust.



We then lined the floor with a vapour barrier that went up and out of the third layer of tyres. That was done to accommodate for rising damp.

These alterations had a chance to prove themselves when we had those storms last week. After the storm had settled, we observed the building and the floor and inside was bone dry. Many thanks to everyone involved.

NIMBIN ENVIRONMENT CENTRE NEWS



by Philippe Dupuy,
President

Gift Ideas

So as Christmas comes and we get ready to celebrate, let's not succumb and open the floodgates to cheap junk, later pollution.

Let's have careful selection of what we buy—things made nearby—so we stop polluting, for many critters are dying.

Let's make tomorrow free of sorrow.

At Nimbin and Casino Environment Centres we have hampers of goods made in the neighbourhoods to cause minimal impact on the planet — that's a fact.

Soap, shampoo, hemp oil will no doubt spoil, lip balm, incense, insect repellent that uses no propellant.

What taste better than macadamia butter, jams, rice, coffee, chai tea? They're great gifts, you'll see. The list goes on, but the downfall is that I can't rhyme them all.

We've made nifty hampers at 15 to 30 dollars each.

Come, shop and buy it's guilt free, I testify.

And we can deliver around here, but not wherever.

So let's shut down Santa's factories in China and other exploited countries.

At Christmas, investors rub hands in glee.

Wouldn't it be nice if they stayed empty?

Greenies

We are the Greenies, we fight the greedies, we care about the earth, for all beings have worth.

We are ridiculed and mocked and made the laughing stock by the greedy who fear us, for we expose their lust.

We are proud to stand for the weak and their land.

But who are the Greenies? Are we just a bunch of hippies?

Are we some ferals with loose morals? Some feel-good city dweller, some yuppie do-gooders?

No! We are also farmers, many kind of workers, ordinary men and women concerned about the Environment.

For we all know that we cannot grow beyond the limit of the planet.

Our needs can be met but not our greed — this, we can all concede.

Here is a simple test after which you can attest whether you're a greenie or just an uncaring greedie. Do think that greed is good? To have more food than we need when others have no feed?

That animal cruelty is fine if it makes money? That the forest can be cut down, thousand-year old trees knocked down that serve as nests for animals to breed and rest?

To pollute rivers, lakes and sea with plastics, rubbish and debris that dugongs and turtles swallow to suffer and die a death so slow, that you'll never want a plastic bag, fake coffee cup or another mag!

And how do you feel when a great big whale's meal is tons of rubbish that is so carelessly ditched instead of plankton, fish squid or krill, its usual dish?

When its great big mass expires and gasps on a lonely beach, well out of reach of most people to see, do we live on carefree when the sea is dying while some are benefitting? So I hope that you now understand that it's time to make a stand.

That Greenie tag is nothing more than a gag to stop you and I, acting while they are pillaging and profiting.

Join us and let's change course if we still can, of course!

The greedies claim we are few, it's a lie for we are all of

you.

We are the people, together we are unbeatable.

Let's stay bonded as one welded, so when they come for gas, drill, pollute and harass, when they come with guards or take down our placards, when they put up fences and other defences we will stay put.

Protect what's underfoot, blockade and resist, wear them out and insist we will not back off until they pack up and bugger off.

But it's not enough to be stopping out of control mining.

The gas they seek under our home is only a sign of a bigger syndrome of the contempt we hold for nature as a whole.

We've been going along with conglomerations headlong; our appetite for consumption could drive us into oblivion.

All manner of plastic is in the long term unrealistic.

We have many ways of survival, our creativity is unrivaled—there are many other means than reliance on benzene.

Wave, wind and sun in moderation can be done.

Hemp and bamboo are just two that are viable—that is undeniable.

They have fibre and strength to meet our needs at length, so good precious timber can be left for valued furniture.

The list goes on and on but we are blocked by corruption.

If wise men and women had a say solutions would be here yesterday.

The Earth is our mother we are dependant on her. She is sacred and must be respected, not to be probed and exploited like some cheap whore we then later ignore.

The mess that's been made might never be unmade. So here are some truths for juvenescence and youth, but mostly for those heads buried down the sand in dread, there are billions like you so heads up, it's long overdue.

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass



I want to warmly thank all of you who took part in the 2013 Great Koala Count. Because of your involvement and the regional media's great support, the inaugural Count has been declared a success.

Nearly 800 people from across NSW (with a handful from South Australia, Victoria and Queensland) registered. While far fewer actually lodged records, I'm proud to report that the biggest concentration of participants was in the Northern Rivers. You contributed more than a third of the 954 koala sightings and 323 unsuccessful searches.

Friends of the Koala's early commitment to the event ensured that the Count's sponsors, the National Parks Association of NSW and the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, chose our region to be the pilot's focus. Planning for next year's event has already commenced.

So, why is Friends of the Koala so interested in the Great Koala Count? After all, we've been inviting koala sightings for years. Combined with the obligatory recording of koalas admitted into care, we receive reports of between 600 and 700 koalas from across the region annually. Our database, which goes back to 1989, is widely used regionally.

The short answer to the question is that we hope the Count will reach out to people who are not yet engaged. The Count's purpose-designed App BioTag we believe will have attracted people who aren't already reporting koala sightings. We're expecting such folk to stick with it, continuing to share their sightings with Friends of the Koala now that this year's Count has closed. Better still, they might want to become more involved in koala conservation.

As well as that, BioTag has been developed by The Atlas of Living Australia, a Federally funded entity which is the most likely vehicle for producing a national koala database. Creation of such a database is of particular interest to Friends of the Koala because we want to extend use of our data for conservation purposes.

The Count's scientific supervision is also important. Co-ordinating ecologist, Dr Grainne Cleary has been careful to link the Count with elements of previous postal and web-based surveys. This continuity will help to monitor population trends by providing information about contemporary distribution: actually knowing where koalas are living and in what numbers. Building a more detailed picture of how koalas are using the landscape and responding to threats will, over time, inform the planning of conservation strategies, including those appropriate to a hotter and drier climate.

The promise of an accessible published report on the analysis of the data collected during the Count is another reason for Friends of



Home for Christmas — Jason, a 6 year old male suffering from conjunctivitis, released back to the wild at the end of November. He had been in care at the Koala Care Centre for six weeks.

the Koala's support. People want to know that their contribution has been worthwhile. Receiving a copy of the report will, we hope, consolidate their interest and commitment.

On a personal note, I got a lot out of the Count. It expelled me from my study and computer, back into the field looking for koalas. I had resolved to spend as much time as possible during the 11 days of the Count searching key localities in my neck of the woods, the Wyrallah Tucki area.

First I concentrated on our own modest property through which koalas pass on a fairly regular basis. My first search was unsuccessful; not a koala to be seen or heard. Happily, in the following days that changed. Beyond our place most of my searching was conducted from roads. Usually I searched by myself and I saw a lot of koalas, many with signs of disease.

Apart from my own searches I've enjoyed checking out records submitted by others. I'm also enjoying sharing comments forwarded by Dr Cleary as she's verifying each record. There's still a long way to go but we expect her analysis will be released in February 2014.

Christmas being just around the corner, you may be thinking of shopping for presents. Friends of the Koala's Support-a-Koala program is a thoughtful and satisfying gift for both giver and receiver. We also offer gift vouchers to the amount you nominate from the Friends of the Koala Plant Nursery, and a range of merchandise available at the Koala Care Centre, Rifle Range Road, East Lismore.

Wildlife rehabilitators are on call 24/7, 365 days a year. Over this festive season, spare a thought for those wonderful individuals who voluntarily forego a drink and even leave their Christmas lunch to attend to a distressed koala or other critter.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02)6622 1233. For information about koalas, their food trees, how you can assist koala conservation visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org email: info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone 6621 4664. You can also follow us on Facebook.

Environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat should be reported to the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 131 555.

Happy koala spotting and please remember to put out water bowls during this hot, dry weather.

What it means to be Australian

Steve Maginnity recently presented a day workshop on Australian native bees at Tutti Fruitti farm, Lillian Rock.

There are over 1500 species of Australian native bees, black, yellow, red, metallic green or even black with blue polka dots. They can be fat and furry, or sleek and shiny. Most Australian native bees are solitary and raise their young in burrows in the ground or in tiny hollows in timber.

Australia also has 10 species of social native bees that do not sting. Their range is only about 500m, compared to 5km for the European bee. Native bees are often confused with flies but bees have four wings, flies only two.

Natives store their honey and pollen in clusters of small resin pots near the edges of the nest. Sugarbag is a rare product to be savoured because each hive only produces about 1 kg of honey in a year.

Using natives bees to pollinate macadamia plantations has seen a 10% increase in production.

They have been shown to be valuable pollinators of other crops, including mangoes, watermelons and lychees. They may also benefit strawberries, citrus, avocados, blueberries.

European bees (*Apis mellifera*) are in danger throughout the world from the varroa mite. Native bees are not affected by varroa or other diseases of European

Beekeeping news

by James Creagh



bees. Native bees can be rescued from fallen trees, either kept in the section of the log with their nest or transferred to a native bee box that is easy to put together. Contact the local bee group – see below. Land clearing and landscaping can destroy food sources and nest sites, and you can help by planting nectar-rich flowers and providing new nest sites in your garden.

Good plants for attracting native bees include: *Abelia grandiflora*, *Angophora*, *Baeckea*, *Buddleja davidii*, *Callistemon*, *Eucalyptus*, *Grevillea* hybrids, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Lavandula*, *Leptospermum*,

Melaleuca and *Westringia*. A bundle of bamboo canes or a block of hardwood drilled with holes (4 to 9 mm wide and 150 mm deep) may also provide valuable new nest sites for local resin bees and leafcutters.

The next meeting of the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers will be the first Sunday of February 2014. For more info email: nimbinnaturalbeekeepers@yahoo.com.au or phone James on 6689-7575.

If you see a swarm, call Bayleigh on 0413 976 342. Nimbin Natural Beekeepers are starting a web page to provide info about keeping bees: www.naturalbeekeepers.nimbin.nsw.au

Look out for the Devil



by Triny Roe

Thorny trunk and branches, prickly leaves, reaches 3 or 4 metres tall and is coming to a garden, roadside, park, paddock or forest near you ... if it hasn't already.

Giant Devil's Fig, *Solanum chrysotrichum*, first arrived in the Northern Rivers about 35 years ago. Initially restricted to the hills and valleys around Tuntable Creek this vigorous plant has, in the last several years, extended its range much further afield. GDF has been found west at Toonumbah. It is now widespread throughout SE Qld and recently been discovered south of the Bruxner Highway near Coffs Harbour.

Around Nimbin, more and more people are reporting its arrival on their properties. Typically they say, "We had one last year and now they are everywhere". Seed is spread by water, birds and bats which feed on the fruit so plants can come up anywhere. GDF is often found along fence lines, under mature trees and on roadsides and creek banks. Seed can also be carried on vehicles and farm machinery to new areas.

If you see one suddenly appearing on your place, don't delay. This hardy plant grows rapidly. Luckily its mature size means it is easy to spot and deal with before it flowers. If GDF has an opportunity to set seed it will develop into a dense stand, exclude other plant species and restrict access.

GDF can be recognised by its large, up to 40 cm long and 30cm wide, leaves with 7 to 13 lobes covered in prickles. It matures in 1 to 2 years to produce clusters of white flowers in Autumn to Spring, followed by orange yellow oval fruit in the Summer. Though enjoyed by bats and birds, the fruit and other plant parts are poisonous to animals and humans.

The root system of a mature GDF plant is extensive (pictured). If using non-chemical removal it is important to get out all the roots as they readily sucker and new plants will grow from root fragments left behind. Stems and branches left lying on the ground will also continue to grow in this high rainfall climate. When removing juvenile plants make sure the deep tap root is not cut off as it will soon



re-shoot even more robustly. The thorns are very sharp and thick gloves are advised when handling. If fruit are present, remove carefully, bag and destroy by deep burial or burning. Do not send to green waste.

GDF is a native of Mexico where it is traditionally used as a fungicide to treat conditions like athlete's foot. Like many other introduced plants from the Central America region, it came without its natural population inhibiting factors, loves the climate here and though it took a while to really take off, the last decade has seen a dramatic explosion in its numbers and distribution.

Warnings were sounded in the late 1990s about this weed but not enough was done and declaration did not happen. Already listed as an environmental weed, GDF is still waiting for official classification as noxious in NSW (already declared in Qld). When this happens, tipped to be very soon, it will then place a legal obligation on landholders to deal with it. But why wait? Do yourself a favour and act swiftly.

Unfortunately at this stage there will always be new incursions but like groundsel which proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s, a concerted effort will hopefully see this aggressive species tamed and brought under control.

Or perhaps someone would like to start up a business harvesting the feral population to extract the fungicides?

In the meantime, happy weeding.

Fruits of our efforts

What to plant in December:

Aubergine, beans, beetroot, capsicum, carrot, celery, Chinese cabbage, corn, cucumber, tomato, radish and lettuce.

We are coming to a close of our school garden year at Tuntable Falls Primary School. We are still enjoying the fruits of our year's efforts: the ongoing rewards are still plenty: harvesting a variety of garden salads, Asian greens, beetroot, snake beans, herbs, silverbeet etc.... Our tomato plants are laden with fruit, still green but ripening by the day. The children cannot believe the size of our sunflower plantation! They are "huge" and "gigantic" and "even taller than Thomas..."; all sowed from the seeds we saved from last year's crop.

The queen of all our crops certainly is the artichoke. Still eating some fruit while some have gone into flower. All children in the school have kept their memories in lots of wonderful visual art representations: the younger children used water colours as well as pastels to realize their impressions, while the older ones used different drawing techniques as well as computer manipulated pictures to express their reflections on the topic of our artichokes.

In class we have been investigating the seven holy grains that keep the world fed.

Turning this lesson into a authentic and real experience, we aim to plant all of the grains in our garden over the coming year: this week we planted our first one: Rice. Nimbin's own dry land rice grower Frank Boyle has generously donated the rice seeds (long grain and short



grain) for us to have our own crop. After five days it has already sprouted and the children are impressed, amazed and full of anticipation for the harvest in about four months.

Over the last couple of weeks we managed put up a new 5000 gallons tank and to set up the first part of our irrigation system (huge thank you to Phillip and Dean). It is dripping away beautifully.

Next week we are going to commence our annual ritual of laying the garden to rest. We celebrate our garden year, reflect on our learning and we spend an entire day in the garden with local artists supporting us to create some garden art work. Furthermore, we will harvest all produce and cover the open beds with a legume crop (cow peas, inoculated and pelletized) to stop the weeds from taking over and to nourish the soil with some extra nitrogen over the long summer break.

Back into the garden in late January. Until then, happy holidays and lots of rain.

Blue Knob gears up for Christmas

by Jim Arachne

The Blue Knob annual Christmas Market will be held on 21st December.

Local crafts feature this year, hand-made from local materials – perfect Christmas presents, and it's not too late to sell your own craft items.

There'll also be performances, a big Christmas cake (with custard) served at 11am, a raffle, drawn at 11:30am, with \$100 of market produce to win or a real gingerbread house or \$25 to spend at the Gallery Café.

The market will trade until 2pm. If you're interested in being part of it, give Jenny a call on 0488-009-808.

Produce wanted

We're looking for a few new produce sellers. Shane, who's been selling bananas, sweet potatoes, potatoes and lots more will be leaving. We don't need more greens right now, but please give Jenny a call if you have other vegetables for sale.

Prizes for pumpkins

Do you grow pumpkins? Next year our Pumpkin Festival is Saturday 26th July.

I mention this now, so people have enough time to get beds ready and to plant some



pumpkins.

Remember to allow for different maturing times – around 100 days for butternut but more like 180 days for Queensland blue.

December Talks

Saturday 7th December, 10am. Humanely killing a chook – Bill McHenry.

See how to kill, gut and pluck a chook and get it ready for the oven.

Blue Knob Farmers Market runs every Saturday, rain, hail or shine, 8.30am to noon, on Blue Knob Road near the corner of Lillian Rock Road, 8km from Nimbin in the grounds of the Blue Knob Gallery.

End-of-year at Tuntable Kindy



At Stradbroke Island

by Deborah Williams

Tuntable Kindy class has been very busy this year-end. The last month has included animals, islands and festivals.

The children have discovered the answers to the questions they posed about African animals. Can hyenas climb trees? (No.) And can giraffes do the splits? (Nearly!)

A week in North Stradbroke Island on the school community camp also had many opportunities for learning. Six days of learning with parents, teachers and older children: how to set up camp, eating and playing together and many long walks and bicycle rides, is of great value to 5/6 year olds!

Back to school after this mid-term island break, found the children relaxed and comfortable, quite at ease with each other. Who wouldn't be after days of fun and interaction? The

enthusiasm for learning about the St Lucia Festival, baking St Lucia 'cat' breads, for sitting in group situations, completing their phonemes, singing, painting; the list is endless, was revitalized!

This last week, the celebration of Divali has added even more spice and colour to their last few weeks in Kindy.

Every Thursday morning the class has welcomed a group of transition preschoolers. This has also helped the present Kindys understand that they have reached the year-end and they now look forward to the next stage in their school journey. Not to mention the benefits for the 2014 group. They are settling in and beginning to understand the new routines of 'big school' while they also get to know each other.

The class for 2014 is rapidly reaching capacity and any queries can be directed to the school office.

A four day Sojourn



Students getting ready to swim with sharks

Coffee Camp Public School's senior students (classes 4-5 and 6) recently enjoyed a fun-filled and action-packed four day excursion to Dorrourghy Environmental Education Centre and Sea World. According to all involved, the whole experience was great.

The focus was on environmental and rainforest education at Dorrourghy, which both challenged and stimulated the kids. In the evening, teachers and kids told funny stories, sang songs and danced the night away.

The final excursion day at



Sea World was all fun with an opportunity to swim with sharks being a highlight of the trip.

Bahzooley '13



by Marian Webb,
Music teacher, NCS

Hours of fun, dance and musical mayhem rocked the hall at Nimbin Central School for the annual Big Bahzooley, when musicians young and old gathered to tell stories and get people dancing. The balmy night suited outdoor dining, with delicious vegetarian and non-veg food on offer.

Inside the hall, some wonderful sustainable design projects by students showed the depth of knowledge held in our community and carried on in the visions of our children. 7 Sibley could adapt some of the ideas that catered for floods, energy generation and food growing as integral parts of the building designs.

Creative capes, evening dresses and a ceremonial robe were displayed alongside these by textiles students. And of course there was a wonderful display of work by our talented art students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Frank Zappa look-a-like, Jack Doyle wailed away on his harmonica with full brass section and a 14-piece staff band to get the crowd moving at the end of the night. A new feature was some fine tapping and acrobatic dance by students. The wealth of helpers and



community support was very heart-warming and encouraging for everyone involved, so a good night was had by all.

Funds raised will be used to refurbish some canteen equipment and expand the Performing Arts program.



Official Opening of preschool

Nimbin Preschool celebrated the construction of its new building, and journey into the future, with an official opening ceremony on Saturday 30th November.

Past, present and future preschool generations, family and friends helped celebrate this new chapter in the history of Nimbin Preschool, with the building officially opened by 4-year old preschooler Griff Gleeson, in the presence of Lismore Mayor Jenny Dowell and Bundjalung elder Cec Roberts.

The Nimbin Community Preschool has been onsite at Cecil Street since

1983, after beginning as a mother's group in 1980. Housed in the bales of the A&I Society at the showgrounds, the preschool committee started fundraising for a purpose-built preschool in 1993.

In 2012, after almost 20 years of fundraising and many thousands of hours volunteered by generations of Nimbin families, a purpose-built preschool building was completed and ready for use.

Service director Kylie Kingston said, "Our current children have been enjoying and thriving in this building for a year now, and so we are pleased that



Dance celebration of new birthbath donated by Nimbin Bakery.

finally we have held our official opening celebration."

Contact Diane Wilder, educational director, on 6689 1203 or by email to: nimbinpreschool@bigpond.com Visit the website at: www.preschool.nimbin.nsw.au

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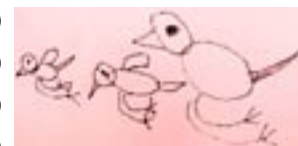


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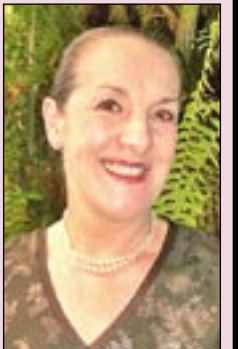
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Drawn: 13th December 2013



Snake in the chookyard

This close-up of an agitated diamond python, engorged from its recent meal and about to be removed from the chookyard, was courageously snapped by young Oliver O'Reilly in his backyard in Nimbin.

Send your photos to us at: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com

The world according to...

Magenta Appel-Pye

What did you want to be when you were young?

The only thing I dreamt of being, apart from taller, was a psychic healer. Not a normal job choice for a 7 year old. My mum and grandmother were both psychic mediums and I also had 'the gift', so for me it was a natural choice. My family inherited The Sydney Spiritualist Library and I started learning about occult subjects from the age of 10.

It's difficult being a highly sensitive child. I was constantly told to "toughen up" but I didn't know how. It's like telling Chopper Read to "embrace his feminine side". I quickly learnt not to mention my esoteric interests at school as most people didn't have

a clue what I was talking about or even believe such things are possible. Quantum physicists are only now able to measure and are beginning to understand the principles used when doing psychic work but we're still denied by skeptics.

I was always sensing other's pain and problems. In adolescence I masked this tendency with alcohol. During this stage I just wanted to be 'normal'. At career guidance counselling there was no aptitude test for supernatural abilities. They said I should be a psychologist. Not too far off but without all the exciting extras. As I matured, I found my hyper-sensitivity was actually my greatest gift. For many years now



I've worked as a psychic healer/counselor/reader and run psychic development groups.

I am no saint and I certainly have my problems, in fact it is these that give me the compassion,

Weird careers

understanding and dedication to help others, but at the risk of being scorned and burnt at the stake, I'm out, psychic and proud!

Check out my website at: www.magentaappelpye.com.au



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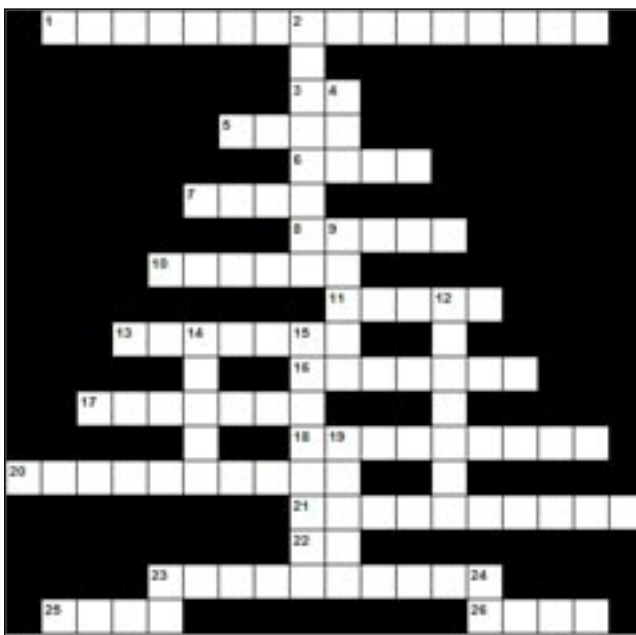
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Nimbin Crossword

2013-11
by Synic



Across

- Rudolph (3,5,8)
- Ham Radio (init.)
- Uncouth guest
- Sled landing zone
- Bloodsucking (human?) parasite
- Ritual drink (in someone's honour)
- Elvish professional in the polar workshop
- Seasonal missives
- Aniseed liqueur
- If you can't cut it down with an axe (3,1,3)
- Give? In attendance
- The first 17 across from my true love
- (A decision) uninfluenced by emotion or feelings
- This jingles all the way (6,4)

- Intended recipient of 17 across (on label)?
- Titan who stole fire from the gods
- (and 26 across) The part of what this grid depicts indicated by the position of these two solutions? Arboreal shag (4,4)
- See 25 across.

Down

- Award (medal?)
- Male sibling
- Largest mammalian apex predators
- Washing up cloth (4,3)
- Early Abrahamic prophet
- Copy, reuse (3,5)
- Apportion
- Sports class
- Senior (init.)

trivia@thebowlo

Devised by the Nimbin Bowlo's Quizmaster, Marty

Questions

- What is the Asian country that measures Gross Domestic Happiness rather than Gross Domestic Product?
- What is the name of the craft of cutting paper out and pasting it on to things?
- Who the short story "We can remember it for you wholesale" which was the basis for the Arnie film *Total Recall*?
- By what name is the north star also known?
- What was the name of the sect formed by Ignatius of Loyola.
- With which part of the body does a haematologist deal?
- Which band has been signed up to open the revamped stadium in Adelaide next March?
- What is the chemical symbol for lead?
- Who is our foreign minister?
- What was the name of the American photographer famous for his landscape photography, especially in Yosemite National Park.

Answers

- Bhutan. Happiness over Money? Whatever next?
- Decoupage. Not to be confused with decollate. That is a more serious hobby.
- Phillip K Dick. If you think I'm gonna make a smart-arsed comment about that...
- Polaris. North... Pole... makes sense really.
- The Society of Jesus, aka The Jesuits. "Give me a child until he is eight and he is mine for life".
- Hmmmm
- The blood and bone marrow.
- The Rolling Stones. A combined age of 800 or so, and they still rock. Not a Ho gangsta in sight. Just plain honest Rock n' Roll
- Pb. Plumbum as the Romans used say.
- Julie Bishop. Just the woman to sort out them pesky Chinese and Indonesians. Fix them with a steely stare and threaten to make them stand in the corner. Yes mam.
- Ansel Adams

The convoluted path to local food

by Eric Smith

The Blue Knob Farmers Market will be serving Christmas cake at the market on the 21st of December. The cakes are waiting, wrapped in brandy soaked linen cloth and foil, in biscuit tins on the shelf. And this is the story of how it was made.

First of all, the recipe is a deviation from the one I have been using for more than a decade. Towards the end of the last century, at a Salvation Army store in Northern California, I found a book published by a Mrs McKee, who had been cook to a young Queen Elizabeth. Many of the recipes were "fancied up" prepared foods, making the queen seem a little more human somehow, but not really of interest to make oneself. Back to the desserts, with the queens favorite Christmas cake, made every 13th of November, and stored away to be sent to Sandringham House for Christmas Day. For whatever reason, I tried it that year, to such positive feedback that I have hardly missed a year since.

This year, however, the cake was re-worked to include as much locally grown food as possible. One of the most prominent ingredients, eggs (a double recipe requires

twenty), was volunteered along with the assignment to bake the cake. Dolph and Jilly at The Biochar Project donated them, including three duck eggs (duck eggs are famous for good strong whites, excellent for baking). As for flour, most of it is locally grown spelt, stone ground at home by Jenny Creasy, although sieved for lightness. For butter, I finally chose Norco, due to their local history (did you know that the mail used to be delivered by the cream truck when we were a major dairy centre?)

Dried fruit, however, proved challenging at such short notice. There are not processors of local dried fruit, and that could be something I can work on for next years cake, drying my own. My larder only provided dried bananas, grown by some friends and dried using the dehydrator that is part of the Nimbin Neighborhood Centre Food Equipment Library (they also have a grain mill if you are getting into this sort of thing, as well as a lot of other cool stuff). Candied peel and marmalade (substituting fingerlime marmalade because that is the way we do it here) were supplied by Tina Fuller, who recommended a recipe for candied ginger, which I made at home with ginger from the



Nimbin Organics store, as they buy from local growers. The remainder, including raisins, sultanas and dried peaches came from Pacific Bulk Foods in Lismore, all Australian, but not terribly local. I will be scoping out local fruit through this year and dehydrating for the 2014 cake.

The 13th dawned, lovely and warm. In the morning I reduce all the dried fruit to even pieces, using kitchen scissors (I learned this making the Australian Rich fruit cake for local shows). I cream the butter and sugar, glad that my butter must come to workable temperature much faster here than for poor Mrs McKee, whom I am picturing in a kitchen somewhere like Wales, cozying up to

a large Aga cooker surrounded by scrubbed wood and copper. As I continue, and she recommends to add the egg yolks one at time, with a teaspoon of flour, while stirring continuously, I begin to picture her with three arms as well. And after the flour and fruit is added, and she says to simply fold in the stiff egg whites, I am not picturing her kindly at all. A double batch overflows my largest mixing bowl and the final batter ends up in a large glass punch bowl. But it all works out, as it always does. Into two large pans in the oven, and after three hours we have cakes. Tastings of the trimmings finds the spelt a little heavier than white flour, but the variety of dried fruit refreshing (why did I include the glace cherries in the past? No-one above the age of seven likes them).

Please come by the market and tell me what you think. And any sightings of local fruit available to dry for next year? Please stop by the Backyarders table and let me know.

Please join us for the Xmas market on the Sat 21st for a free piece of this specially prepared cake served with custard at 11am. The market will include locally made crafts, there'll be performances, a raffle drawn at 11.30am, with \$100 of market produce to win or a real gingerbread house or \$25 to spend at the Gallery Café.

ASTRO FORECASTS BY TINA MEWS WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HEAVENS

December

In the yearly cycle around the zodiac we have reached the sign of freedom-loving Sagittarius, the realm of far reaching visions and expanding horizons. Sagittarius is a fire sign and, similar to Aries and Leo, needs to preserve a feeling of uniqueness and individual importance. One of their main quests is the search for meaning and universal truth. Freedom of movement and thought is essential because Sagittarius must have room to pursue the next piece in the puzzle of the grand plan. It is highly important for Sagittarius to keep their inspirational fires burning, because dealing with the 'banalities' of everyday living can be felt as depressing especially when they find themselves locked in a space or situation with 'no room to move'. It is essential to have a goal they feel enthusiastic about because life is best seen as an adventure. At times they can be their own worst enemies by having placed too high expectations - combined with too little staying power - upon themselves and others with the result of getting miserable when things do not work out as imagined. Mostly, though, they recover fast and are not too shy to tell you what they think because honesty ranks very high in the Sagittarian value system.

The New Moon on December 3 in Sagittarius forms a harmonious trine with higher frequency planet Uranus, encouraging us to take a broader view on things. Like every New Moon, it is a great time to set our intentions for the month ahead and open ourselves for new opportunities. We might feel inspired to move beyond set boundaries and envisage a brighter future. From December 8 - 18, Jupiter, the ruling planet of Sagittarius, the great cosmic benefactor and protector of our Earth, forms a harmonious trine with Saturn, the lord of time and reality. Jupiter is in the caring and nurturing water sign of Cancer (June 2013 - July 2014). These ten days might offer opportunities for completing old projects and being practical about new goals. It may also be a good time to reflect upon what we really need and what is sustainable within given circumstances.

Mars enters the sign of Libra on December 8 and will remain here until July 27. Normally Mars spends about 6 - 8 weeks in a sign but it is slowing down in speed right now in preparation for its retrograde phase which will start early March. Mars is not well placed in Libra and can signify stress in partnerships and our alliances due to the strong desire to have one's own way.



Mars will be part of a Grand Cross and makes stressful aspects to rebel planet Uranus and extremist Pluto, which signifies the potential for explosive and impulsive events all around the planet. Since 2010 the square aspect between the two collective forces Pluto and Uranus has coincided with the outbreak of civil wars and activist movements in many parts of the world. People have been demanding their rights for self-determination, freedom and respect for their autonomy. Uranus can also signify someone or a group of people who stand beyond human emotion and are driven by their own fanatical rules. Further, Pluto as the 'lord of the underworld,' signifies compulsive and hidden forces, the dark powers of control and manipulation. The urge to spy on others is also associated with Pluto.

In our personal lives we might find that we are more easily inclined to argue or pick a fight. The period from December 23 until the end of January 2014 is particularly critical. Keeping expectations of ourselves and others on a realistic level will help with navigating successfully through these complex and problematic times.

The solstice on December 22 indicates the beginning of summer in the southern hemisphere, and signifies both our longest day and shortest night. In the northern hemisphere it is exactly the opposite, indicating the shortest day, the longest night, and the start of winter. The shift from Sagittarius to Capricorn activates the astrological Grand Cross because the solstice Sun will conjoin Pluto in structured Capricorn, square Uranus in wilful Aries, square Mars in the relationship sign Libra and oppose Jupiter in family focused Cancer between now and the 8th of January 2014. These energies work at cross purposes and therefore indicate the increased probability of impulsive, premature actions, relationship dramas and power struggles around home and safety. If we can harness these challenging energies successfully, we might be able to reach a break-through in shifting outmoded structures through self-examination and revision of personal values and beliefs. Venus, the cosmic harmoniser, is moving stationary retrograde just hours before the solstice offering a chance to solve our conflicts diplomatically. However, we must take a step back and remind ourselves of what unites us instead of what separates us.

For personal astrology consultation and/or a forecast for 2014 contact me on 66897413 or 0457903957, via e-mail: star-loom@hotmail.com or visit my web page: <http://nimbin-starloom.com.au>

Aries

Mars, the ruler of your sun sign, will be an important influence over the next 8 months. It could well bring focus onto your relationships where unmet expectations could lead to tension. Your urge to energise and activate others might meet with resistance. It may be better to pull back and use this increase in energy for your own creative projects.

Taurus

Venus, your planetary ruler, is in self-sufficient Capricorn until early March. The stability of your physical world is very important to you. However, the most essential ingredient for living successfully through these complex times lies within your inner resourcefulness and your ability to trust it. Reflect on beliefs that hinder your own growth.

Gemini

Co-operation with others will benefit your social life. Keep yourself busy, but make sure to ground your initiatives and follow through with whatever you have started to avoid disappointments. Your children might be more challenging and unpredictable than usual. Be there for them in a guiding capacity rather than as an authoritarian figure.

Cancer

Jupiter is retrograding through your sun sign until early March encouraging you to explore new facets of your personality. You may have less patience with demands of home and family. Meet any restrictions imposed upon you in an open manner. Honour your desire to understand the 'greater truth' and be ready to explore new concepts

Leo

Right now it is essential to strike a balance between visionary and practical concerns. Restructure your domestic life with the intention to create more freedom; this will allow you to depart on your special quest whenever you hear the calling. Use your intuition when dealing with problems concerning siblings, relatives and/or neighbours.

Virgo

Virgo's mythic task is to ground 'spirit in matter'. Therefore, getting things right and having everything in its place is a prerequisite for your own contentment. However, your main concerns at the moment might be of a financial nature and you could have to deal with unexpected expenses. Keep things simple and have faith in life's abundance.

Libra

Mars, the warrior planet, will be in your sun sign until end of July 2014. This will enhance your urge to be assertive and you might need more space for focusing on your own creative projects. On the other hand you could find yourself in conflict with others. Discovering constructive outlets for this increase of energy will help with keeping your mind and soul balanced.

Scorpio

The right balance between enthusiasm and self control will assist you now in handling emotional, intense situations. Reflect upon your energy and how it may affect others. You could encounter situations where you have to pull back. Realise that others do not feel as intensely as you do.

Sagittarius

Your feeling of connection with the creative forces of the universe might be strong right now. You might be on the search for new goals and objectives. Envisage them and actively work on shifting consciousness. Combine forces with like-minded souls and synchronize your needs with others.

Capricorn

Over the next eight months you can make great progress towards the objectives that you have set for yourself. The current complex astrological patterns indicate that you are inclined to constantly challenge yourself and others to embrace change. You enjoy the excitement of a contest; however, know when to slow down and when to relax.

Aquarius

Right now you might feel a pressing need to explore the hidden realms of existence, compelled to make the unknown conscious. Look for experiences that enlarge your perspective but do not identify your ego with what you believe. If you do, you might try to force your opinions which could cause tension in your communication with others.

Pisces

You might seek increased involvement with others over the next eight months and you might be looking for joint ventures. Keep your expectations as realistic as possible because too high expectations of yourself or others might lead to disappointments. Honour your sensitivity but do not shy away from asserting yourself.