

Thyroid disorders can be fixed

by Brigid Beckett

The thyroid affects our basal metabolic rate and any malfunction can lead to profound imbalances.

Diet and the daily stresses of living contribute to thyroid function. Up to 10% of the population has some dysfunction, but many symptoms are non-specific: low energy, stress or irritability.

Chinese medicine sees these syndromes in terms of liver and spleen, or heart and kidney energies.

The thyroid is in the neck, the bridge between head and body.

Problems in this area are sometimes linked to difficulty in

expressing emotions.

Frequently the pattern seen in the lead-up and early stages of thyroid disorders is liver qi stagnation and spleen deficiency (digestive problems).

This occurs primarily with stress, and can be seen in young, seemingly healthy, people.

Stress may be in the form of continuing frustration and resentment or worry. Not getting enough sleep and shiftwork is often a factor, combined with poor diet, stimulants or overuse of pharmaceuticals.

Symptoms can include anxiety and mood swings, flushing of the upper body, tiredness, menstrual irregularity, eye irritation, or waking in the early hours.

If unaddressed, the heat symptoms will become worse and other patterns develop. This may be kidney and heart yin deficiency, as the cooling elements are burnt up.

There will then be more severe anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, more heat, weight loss, sometimes lower back and knee pain or muscle spasms.

Severe shock or trauma can also disrupt the heart kidney axis and trigger hyperthyroidism, which has a different, in some ways opposite, set of symptoms.



Possible symptoms are fatigue, weight gain or difficulty losing weight, depression, sluggish digestion, carpal tunnel syndrome, dry or sparse hair, lower back pain, and loss of hearing.

In both cases, Chinese medicine aims to correct the underlying constitutional imbalances that first led to the disorder.

Acupuncture is very effective in treating liver qi stagnation and associated symptoms. This pattern can be quickly addressed once underlying causes have been found.

The more severe patterns of hyperthyroid (overactive thyroid)

disorder can also be treated with Chinese medicine, but it will take longer to reach stability with some symptoms..

As always, earlier treatments get quicker results. The Chinese medicine approach is preferable to either surgical removal of the thyroid or radiation treatment, and relapses are less likely than when Western antithyroid medication is used alone.

Hypothyroid (sluggish thyroid) cases, as long as the thyroid has not been removed, will respond well to treatment with acupuncture and herbs. An improvement in symptoms should happen over a few weeks.

Brigid is a qualified Chinese Medicine practitioner who can be contacted through Lismore Community Acupuncture on 0431-702-560.

Journey to the centre of You

by Daniel Keszler

The energetic calibrations and changes since the end of 2012 have created an environment where rigid old patterns have weakened and the definition of ourselves and humanity at large are strongly in flux.

To align oneself to one's Energetic Core is key to the stability within one's personality and environment, as we are flooded with an information avalanche through technology which makes it hard, at times, to know what to believe in.

As one is engaging in the environment and one's senses are directed outwards, so one has to balance this engagement with the engagement of one's inner being and most importantly, one has to have an anchor in one's unchangeable core existence.

This can all be managed simultaneously, or at least as a shuttling from outer attention to inner attention and back. The mind, the thinking, is the middle station in between the two and



also acts as an interpreter. The inner is the feelings, the body sensations, inner sensing.

The Core then is the heart, the central sense of being, the unchangeable, the infinite, Spirit. It is also the approving entity, for ones actions, intuition, inner knowing.

One way to access the Core is to bring your attention to your belly or to your heart, become aware of your breath, relax any grasp on the

mind content and come into the state of pure being.

One can use an individual approach to the core, as long as it releases the mind and creates the state of grounded and centred being, a sense of being here now with whatever is.

With 2014 we will be moving into the year of Choice. To make a good choice for oneself, one must know where one is and what one's needs are.

The Centre for Balance and Empowerment provides assessment-based therapies, including massage, acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, myofascial release, EMF Balancing Technique, holographic kinetics and counselling.

We are open in Nimbin every Wednesday and Friday (6689 1529), on Thursday we are available in Mullumbimby (6684 4420). You can also contact us on 0419 182 989. In 2014 we are hoping to open in Lismore.

Have a great transition into 2014, we are grateful for all the support and love and appreciation.

Cleaning the flaws

I've been thinking about the

necessary work therapists and healers in general have to do on themselves in order that projections and assumptions are avoided while working with others.

It dawned on me that the work is a bit like house cleaning and then the pun struck me, it's cleaning the flaws and not being careless about it. It's thorough work that is required.

This kind of work means increasing our awareness of not only our sense of ourselves (our beliefs, hopes, dreams, vulnerabilities) but what we project onto others: what things we admire in others, and what we use to condemn in others, and also those things that inadvertently jump out of our mouths. When we engage in judging others, we most often do it as if we were not part of a relationship with that person and, as such, we project onto them very detached, very disowned shadows of ourselves.

The Shadow, as Jung called it, has both negative and positive qualities (two faces) and thus is found in those qualities that scream at us when another person displays it or idolize it when someone else personifies it. When we idolize someone we are sometimes just projecting a disowned part of ourselves that we have set aside out of a false sense of modesty. I, for instance, get quite defensive when people comment on my achievements and yet promote, somewhat idealistically, the almost glamorous achievements of others.

Two things happen simultaneously for me when my achievements are commented upon: I forget what I'm supposed to know and I feel ashamed. The air around me in that moment is thick with stories. It's noticing things like that Shadow work comes to its own, and not just for curiosity's sake, but as a matter of necessity, particularly for those who work closely with other people.

The Shadow has other characteristics as well. As in a dream I heard recently, it lies in a metaphorical box in which something or other is leaking its contents. The box doesn't even need to be opened for the contents to leak out. It's like a rotten piece of



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell
M Counselling, PhD

fruit that, instead of drying up, is dribbling out the stuff that refuses to be ignored. The leaking Shadow comes out in displacement behaviour (like smoking, drinking, compulsive sexual encounters, excessive eating, or playing endless video games, for instance) that

is contrary to our own ideas about health, morality and safety. It's what we do when we don't want to do something else. When you repeat that behaviour seemingly involuntarily, it's a sign that your Shadow is running the show.

So it's necessary to know what is going on in the Shadow world; to bring conscious awareness to it and give it a voice. Sometimes this Shadow work is helped by seeing another therapist, of whatever modality, to increase our awareness of our own processes so that we can be not only more present to our own purposes and needs but to achieve what is called "phenomenological bracketing" when working with others. We need an acute sensitivity to ourselves and an acute sensitivity to the person we're working with, and the wisdom to know the difference between us.

Healers are at risk all the time of being only acutely aware of their patients and of not knowing where they begin and end and this is why personal work is critical. A healer, cannot afford to have the boundaries blurred too much. It is this reason, or at least part of it, that educational bodies are so strict in their requirements for practitioners. Knowing the stuff of therapy, medicine, acupuncture, herbs, or whatever, is just part of it. Knowing which belongs to me and which belongs to you is hugely necessary. The awareness of self as an instrument of healing and the awareness of self as an independent being protects us and allows us to continue doing therapeutic work for many years, without burn-out. Thus cleaning the flaws as an ordinary housekeeping job is really necessary, and like cleaning the floors in our homes, this work is something that is never done once and for all. You have to do it regularly, otherwise the muck just accumulates.

Nimbin Hospital Information

Immunisation clinic

For 0-5 year olds. Clinic in Nimbin Hospital, second Tuesday of the month. Next Clinic: 10th December. For appointments, phone 6620-7687.

Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday at Nimbin Hospital. For appointments, phone 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health).

Women's Health Nursing Service

Every third Thursday of the month. Next clinic: 19th December. For confidential Pap Smears, breast checks, contraceptive advice, post natal checks, general health information. For appointments, phone 6688-1401.

Nimbin community nurses

Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm. For assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy; provision of Palliative Care in the Home; provision and co-ordination of Aged Care Packages. Wednesday morning Drop-in Clinic at the NSP room, for health checks, minor wound care assessments and referrals.

Free health checks in the park

Every second Friday we will be set up at a table in Allsopp Park, run by a Nurse Practitioner and a Registered Nurse, for assessments, education and referrals. Health checks include Cardiac, Respiratory and Stroke risk assessments, BP,

Oxygen saturation, Weight, Blood Glucose, Cholesterol. Everyone welcome.

Free respiratory clinic

Second Thursday of the month, at Nimbin Hospital. Run by specialist Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner. Spirometry readings. Includes assessment, education, referrals. Next available appointments: 12th December. Phone 6688-1401.

Free diabetic clinic

Third Thursday of the month, at Nimbin Hospital, run by a Diabetes Educator, Leanne Booth. Assessment and Education. Next clinic: 19th December. For appointments, phone 6630-0488.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

NUHA would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

November street basket raffle winners were Sue Adler, John Wilcox and Annie Stevenson. A big thank you for everyone's kind donations in supporting our hospital.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary meet on the second Friday of each month in the hospital conference room at 10am, next meeting will be on February 14th 2014. Volunteers to help with fundraising are always welcome. Come along, join us and support your local hospital.



PAIN

Bleeding out from deep inside
The pain of a thousand suns
Anger in the very spirit
Nowhere left to run

Arthritic acid eats out joints
Corrupts; corrodes between
Scalding steam vents through the
mouth
Spitting shit from spleen

Enraged liver; rampaging river
Lockjaw tight dammed down
Itchy-scratchy skin – burnt-out bowel
Forever etched-in frown

Fear is rising like high tide
Grief pours out my heart
Not waving – drowning in the deep
Then facing back to start

Did they steal you from your Self
And leave you cast adrift
No guts, no glory – no will, no more
Reach high – now help is swift

No longer am I breaking down
I willingly dissolve
Surrendering, remembering
I am – becoming whole

I now accept this is my life
I step up – take on change
Forgive myself, then re-learn love
Flow – and feel real joy again.

– Zuela Christie

Put your feet where your heart is



ETIKO has arrived at the GreenBank, a range of ethically produced footwear using fair trade organic cotton and sustainably produced plantation rubber from Sri Lanka.

The range includes high-top and low-cut sneakers for adults and kids, and a range of thongs, the sale of which supports four major international aid organisations (Save the Children, The Wilderness Society, Surfrider Foundation and The Orangutan Project).

This is footwear with serious eco and humanitarian credentials.

We are also looking forward to introducing a new cosmetic range to the shop, just in time for Christmas.

The ECO minerals range is produced in Australia by a Byron Bay company using all natural ingredients, cruelty free practices and biodegradable packaging.

This range beautifully complements our own Naturally Nourished – organic and cruelty free skincare made on the premises. It's never been so easy to look effortlessly beautiful.

Also just in is a beautiful selection of cuddly toys and rattles from Lennox Heads based OB Designs.

Our baby range now includes a great

selection of locally made toys and clothing, amber jewellery, stainless steel feeding bottles, natural wood rattles, hair brushes and orthodontic soothers and teethers, not to mention soothing teas and oil blends.

We continue to research wide ranging products, based on customer feedback and needs we identify in our own lives.

We stand by our mission to provide in Nimbin a conscious shopping experience. In an effort to keep your shopping dollar as local as possible, we are continuously updating our range. So don't think if you've seen us once, you've seen it all!

Don't forget we have massage therapists working all day, Monday to Friday, as well as counselling with Dr Jacqui on Saturday mornings, and now our new beautician, Jess, working Saturday afternoons, starting in late November.

We also have the talented Anne Walker doing her Aromatherapy and massage treatments for one full Saturday per month.

Bookings for all practitioners can be made by calling the shop on 6689 1881 or contacting us via our facebook page: *The Green Bank – A Healthy Lifestyle Investment.*

Tea Tastings with delicious Tea Medica iced teas are also available all day every day. We look forward to catching up with you some day soon. Contact us on 6689-1881.

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by Tonia Haynes

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Bowen Therapy and animals

Any other suggestions from you lot out there would be most welcome, because the poor fella goes through pure hell in bad weather. More than any other storm freaked dog I have ever met.

As to the unexpected, miraculous extrusion of Chanel ode cologne now expelled from his panting breath and the scent of Spring wafting from his wiry coat, I can only hypothesise it is due to the dog muesli we have been mixing with his Highland pet mince these past three months.

For those of you looking for the perfect pet meat, Highland beef or chicken is an excellent product: 100% meat with no additives and just a touch of fat. Priced from \$4.50 to \$5.50 a kilo it can be bought in Lismore at Pets and Saddles; Nimbin at the petrol station or Tweed Heads, at Super Pet Shop.

The first jar of Big Dog Muesli came from Dr Edward's stash of good stuff for animals, but being a tad frugal and prone to the opinion that home cooking always tastes better, we decided to make up the next jar ourselves, albeit a slightly different recipe.

Considering the effects from the original jar and then our following mix on my old mate Skippy, the good news needs to be shared.

Lil and Tonia's dog muesli
Rolled oats 2 cups
Millet 2 cups
Alfafa or lucerne 2 cups
Quinoa 1/2 cup
Kelp powder 1/2 cup
Split peas 6 tbsps
Molasses 3 tbsps
Cold pressed flaxseed meal 4

tbsps

Cold pressed hemp seed oil 2

tbsps

A little bok choy, celery,
spinach, cooked or juiced as
needed.

We use a blender to break the dry food down to fine particles and then add the molasses and the hemp seed oil.

The alfalfa we collect from the floor of our local pet produce outlet and we remove the large stalks before blending. The rest of the dry products can be bought from a bulk health food outlet.

Unfortunately I can't suggest an alternative if one does not have some type of food processor: perhaps a mortar and pestle if you are really keen.

A jar of muesli will last about one month for a small dog using one sixth of a cup mixed with their other food once a day.

Large dogs should eat no more than one third of a cup per day and if finances are an issue, big dogs might receive their muesli mix every other day. Better that than nothing. Just make sure the muesli is kept in a cool, dark place.

Lucinda from *Pets and Saddles* in Lismore makes up a similar mix that contains vegetables and is budget friendly.

Animals, like humans, respond positively to a good diet, but unlike many of us, they are very good at changing what they can and letting go of that they can't. For this reason they are wonderful patients when it comes to Bowen Therapy.

They do not ask themselves, "Why is she doing that?!"

How on earth can that help?"

as one performs a gentle flick across a strategic area of the hamstring or inside leg. Instead, as the connective tissue lifts off the flesh where the pain is harbored, they feel the relief almost immediately.

Dogs, cats, horses, cows, sheep, even pet snakes have been known to miraculously recover from injury and stiffness of gait due to a mix of Bowen Therapy, Pranic healing and sometimes, an additive massage

I have treated dogs, cats and horses, and usually the results are most positive. Twice now the cruciate tendons of two different large dogs have healed without surgery.

Injuries that are not treated often turn to arthritis, which is a challenge to alleviate fully, so getting Bowen therapy for an injury as soon as possible is a wise decision.

I charge \$5 per treatment for animals in the clinic grounds, but I am very firm about their accompanying humans continuing treatment for as long as the animal requires, and I am not adverse to suggesting veterinary assistance if it is needed. A treatment on a dog or cat takes about fifteen minutes.

My other passion is treating humans for back, neck, shoulder and limb pain and stiffness. Treatments take about 1¼ hours, and cost \$60.

I am in clinic in Nimbin, Wednesdays and Saturdays and would love to see you, or your pet. Phone now for an appointment. 02 6689-0240 mobile 0439-794-420.

'Til next time,
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Herb of the month – Culantro *Eryngium foetidum*

by Thom Culpeper

Culantro Eryngium foetidum [er-RIN-jee-um]. Syn. Mexican coriander, Recao di monte, Fit-weed, Shadow bennie, Long coriander, Saw-leaf herb, Culantro cimarron (Cuba), Ngo Gai (Vietnam) Jia yuan (China), Herbe puante (West Indies)

Culantro should not be confused with its culinary cousin, Cilantro, as it is superior (with regard to fresh green leaves), than that coriander, *Coriandrum sativa*. They are interchangeable in some cuisines. The ripe and unripe cilantro, as seed, is commonly utilised in Eastern cooking, bakery, liqueurs, sweets and pickles, the root being used extensively in Thai cooking.

Culantro is a long, spiny edged, narrow-leafed, evergreen, bi-annual with greenish-white, leafy bracted summer flowers. The plant is best grown partly shaded, as this encourages softer leaf-spines and encourages the leaves to grow to as much as 250mm in length. Trimming the flower stalks regularly (weekly) will allow a longer harvest of leaves. Grow several plants, harvesting each plant at the rosette. Re-feeding with nitrogen rich organics will allow ratooning or 'come and come again'.

This plant can be propagated by root cuttings and seed, a pH 4.5-6.5 range



is suitable. Pot cultivation will give the best results, euchering the opportunist, pesty/pesky gleaners who love it. Allow one to set seed and save them.

The root is used widely in West Indian, West African and SE Asian cooking. A unique spice mix known as Sofrito (culantro, cilantro and ajicitos, a small, mild, bonnet pepper), is used in Caribbean and Puerto Rican fish and rice dishes. This lovely can be dried, retaining its flavour and colour and unlike cilantro, it retains its colour. In fresh cooking, it is best pre-blanching.

A note on blanching: Bring the water (no salt) to boil, remove from heat, add subject, return to heat, return to boil, remove from heat, drain immediately and immerse in iced-water to hold. This will retain the colour of most botanicals, especially green beans, culantro, celery and asparagus.

A note on pot-culture: Grow in pots!

As energy and your share of water and farm/gardening inputs becomes the source of wealth for the predatory class, time you put a little thought into saving some of the value of your ever diminishing wealth/skill/equity. Feeding you and yours becomes ever-imperative, and keeping the yields of your labour demands ever-smarter management: don't feed the free-loaders.

Pot-culture is as old as China... A glimpse at their know-how points the way. Plant your cucurbits on the outside of embedded, lidded, porous, terracotta pots, water the sump, the inside... (3,000 years ago) Google: J. Needham, SSC, Cambridge.

You can turn the pots to the sun, protect them from difficult atmospheric and manage the pest load. It goes without saying, protecting the garden is more time costly and resource wasteful than most of us can muster.

The rent is better value for pots than Gia's patches and Demeter's earth, think pots, elevated beds, bag-culture and cloches, add compost, blended appropriately, grow and enjoy a wider range of cuisines and a fuller, divergent food life...!

Keeping the pests out of your gardens allows a better enjoyment of the yields of your efforts and grants more time to relish the sweet fragrances of its blossoms.



by Bob Tissot

OK... so it's 4am here in the capital of The People's Republic of Vietnam and before I say more I just need to say that this computer obviously has links to the Politbureau the local equivalent because it continually wants to correct my spelling and add little inflexions above letters, leave letters out o' change entire words to something else. The two "o"s in the lát (last) sentence were actually meant to be "or" and "of". (Newsflash: hitting vowels twice seems to help.)

You may be wondering why I'm up at 4am... So am I. Jet lag comes to mind, if what's left of my grey matter could be called a mind.

What also comes to mind is that if Ghengis Khan had had access to narrow airline seats with no legroom, a crying baby or two and some plastic food in an edible tray, he probably wouldn't have bothered with boiling oil or the removal of bits and pieces of one's corpus delecti in order to extract information from his enemies. Thank you AirAsia.

Naturally, we've discovered that we've packed incorrectly for the local climate in that the

scarves, beanies and thermal underwear will probably be completely unnecessary. The local weather forecasts indicate that China will be rather warmer than originally anticipated.

So much for all the pre-trip weather research. Possibly the weather at home before we left had encouraged a propensity for expecting something extreme, especially after the biggest Typhoon EVER had ripped through the Phillipines and Vietnam and we'd had the mother of all hailstorms at home.

(Later that day) We've got ourselves ensconced right slap bang in the middle of the Old Quarter and like all "Old Quarters" it's probably the most interesting part of Hanoi... bustling with street life and mysterious aromas, narrow streets, fascinating shops and thick with traffic going in every conceivable direction or simply stopped in the middle of a lane way or road, with a cacophony of horns.

Footpaths are for parking, selling or simply living, which forces all pedestrian traffic out to compete with the cars, bikes and trucks.

Diana has been finding the traffic a little daunting, and at times destinations have been

changed to avoid crossing a particularly treacherous piece of tarmac. A young man once actually took us across the road with instructions on how to do it: "Walk slow, never stop, never turn back."

Once, we observed three old ladies crossing a six-lane road and they never even looked at the traffic; they were an island of calm in the maelstrom that flowed around them.

We've also discovered that the street names in the Old Quarter relate to the goods being sold in that street, which is a handy way of learning useless bits of Vietnamese. ("Gai" is bedding and "mahn" is puncture repair, although to be honest, the Old Quarter being over 2000 years old, it probably means "Hoof trimming and stone removal").

The food here is great and the coffee excellent, with the local specialty being "weasel" coffee (we call it civet coffee). The beans have been through the digestive tract of a civet and then the beans dug out of the poo, washed off and roasted.

It's very strong and expensive, even over here. It's sold in various blends with Weasel 1 being 100% Weasel, Weasel 2 being 75% Weasel and 25% other, and so on all the way down to Weasel 9. I'll bring some back if I don't have to sell my soul to get it.

We went down to the main park before dawn and were blown away at how many people were there doing either Tai Chi or some more strenuous exercise all around the lake. Some young guys had taken a number of sets of weights down to the lakes edge and were happily pumping iron while old ladies were slowly Tai Chi-ing to recorded music only feet away and across the lake floated

the sounds of a large Zumba class.

And all before the sun comes up.

It's also extremely hazy (not sure if it's smog or just a regular natural haze) in Hanoi, and a significant proportion of the locals wear face masks in an attempt to avoid "Hanoi Lung".

They're much more substantial than a simple paper face mask and I may just bring one of them home too. They come in various patterns (tartan being very popular) and appear to have some kind of internal infrastructure, although I haven't removed anyone's to check.

We checked out the Ho Chi Minh Museum, presided over by a massive statue of Uncle Ho, and was surprised to find how much their revolution against the French was entwined with the Spanish Civil War.

Lots of tributes to Dali and all the statues are constructed in that chunky, communist cubist style. Unfortunately Uncle Ho's Mausoleum was closed, so we never got to see the man himself in his glass coffin.

Heading off to China tomorrow by bus, hoping to get to Guilin in a day; it looks possible on the map, but we shall see.

Before coming here we had been cautioned about scammers and general unfriendliness, but have discovered that a smile and a willingness to laugh go a long way, and the people we've encountered have been 100% supportive and friendly.

Lots of people having a good laugh at us, and I figure if I'm in the middle of a happy laughing crowd then all is good with the world.



Trés Erotique!

Reviewed by Bob Dooley

Raw Entertainment's presentation of the *Fantasies Erotique* cabaret series in November proved a resounding success, producing a hootin' and hollerin' response at both the Nimbin and Byron venues.

MC "Stess" (Ana Snyman) provided a hilarious introduction to the Mile High Club, welcoming everyone aboard and providing instruction on various pieces of survival equipment, assisted by Naire Bates.

Lighting, smoke and projections by Tone Wonderland 'Crystal Grid' created an ethereal, other-worldly environment which, combined with DJ Pop's sound production and live flute by Kavi, provided an ideal setting for extraordinary performances.

Costumed in burlesque outfits by Raw Designs with body art by Nimbin Tattoo Studio, aerialist Hartje, pole-dancer Alana, fire-twirler Fabien and models Shani, Yazmin, Russell, Rindi, Sam and Lee (and more) engrossed the crowds with a full programme of well-devised and executed routines that refer-

enced various aspects of human sexuality in a fun way.

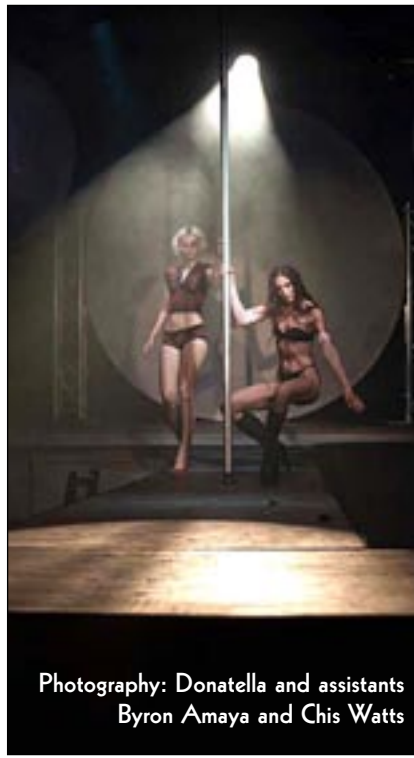
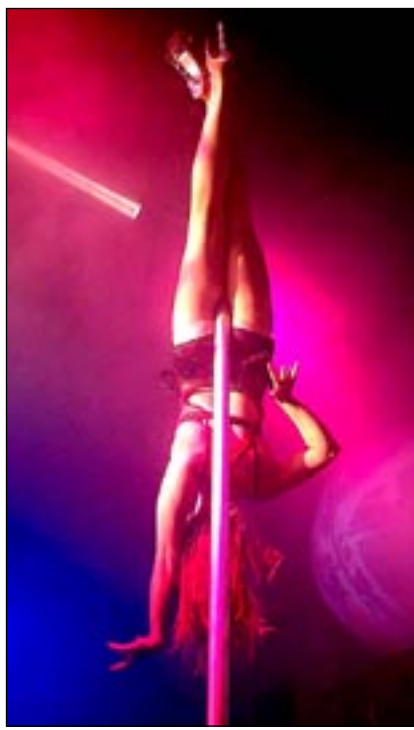
The company's homage to *The Rocky Horror Show*, with Russell as a suitably petulant Dr Frankenfurter, was one of the many highlights of the show. The delicious Turkish food by Zehra was great, too.

Producer Judy Who said she was pleased with the way the show came together, thanks to the professionalism of those involved. "We only had a one-hour rehearsal in the Nimbin Hall, and at the last minute pulled four people off the street to perform, and they were great!"

Prizes of various toys available through the sponsor, The Pleasure Consultant, were given for best-dressed girl, guy and couple, and Judy said, "It was great to see members of the audience up there, strutting their stuff."

"Everyone enjoyed the show and that's the go," she said, also expressing her appreciation of the community helpers on the nights: Cat Anderson, Dionne May, Max Pike, Ruthie and Julie.

A DVD of the show is in post-production, and a new show is in pre-production for next year. Catch it if you can.



Photography: Donatella and assistants
Byron Amaya and Chis Watts

Get 'em off and party!



To finish off a spectacular year of art and bohemian hi-jinx, Dr Sketchys presents La Voila Vixen at the Christmas Striptacular at Byron Bay Brewery on 17th December.

She is accompanied by Eva Vivacia and Miss Dolly Cakes. MC Mae Wild will be on hand to administer mouth-to-mouth for anyone caught in a swoon, with smouldering live music and man-candy for the artists provided by Italy's Alex Maeciano, on the Australian leg of his album tour!

Food, drinks, live music, hedonistic fantasy and general mayhem add to an already unique night.

The theme is Naughty and Nice, so the audience can dress appropriately (or inappropriately) to win some great gifts. Entry is \$15, doors open at 6pm, over-18s only.

Israeli dream, Palestinian nightmare

by Jenny Bush

The trip so far has been extremely revealing and distressing, no question about Israel being an apartheid state.

Every day we hear from another who has either lost or is being threatened with the loss of his/her home/land/livelihood purely on the basis that he/she is not a Jew.

Apparently being a Jew depends on who one's mother/grandmother/great grandmother or even great aunt is or was. Well you know, I have every right to live in Tel Aviv or East or West Jerusalem or in fact in any of the settlements (illegal under international law) despite the fact that I was born in Australia and have an Australian passport and neither I nor my ancestors have ever in fact previously set foot in Israel/Palestine. Those who do not have my lineage or even a much more tenuous maternal connection cannot live in those places or travel on highways (different colour number plates) or even retain the land that has been in their family for generations and for which they have legal title dating back through various occupying forces. One such has a title from the Ottoman, then the British, then the Jordanians and lastly even the Israelis but no permit to build is allowed so they and their family live in caves on the 100 acres they legitimately hold. They are provided with no

services, no water or electricity and the road to the property is blocked with large boulders so we had to walk the last 500 metres. Shortly the eight metre apartheid wall will be extended to cut them off from Bethlehem, their only source of employment or family or education for their children or health service. They are determined to continue and so far with the help of various international agencies support, including Jews for Justice in Palestine who bought and replanted 250 olive trees cut down by the settlers they remain with their mad optimism that one day there will be peace and equality. I'm afraid I don't share their hope as I viewed the surrounding hills, the "Tent of Nations" as they call their collection of caves stood isolated amongst hills covered in Truman Show type communities blocked off from the world by their red roofs, stolen 500 year old olive trees transplanted into the centre of roundabouts for decoration, fountains spurting water in the most arid of lands and razor wire fences.

I have had tears in my eyes several times as I walk through the 100 metre cage that is the checkpoint between Jerusalem and the West Bank even though I do not have to undergo several waiting hours and be treated like a lump of shit. I have learned so much and still understand so little about what is happening here.

The Israelis are burrowing underneath the Al Aqsa Mosque (the third most holy place in Islam) in order to undermine it so that when the scheduled 100-year earthquake comes (Jerusalem is on a fault line), the Al Aqsa Mosque will fall.

Then it will be God's will and the Jews will be able to rebuild their temple, which apparently signifies the arrival of the messiah.

I have walked in the refugee camps, I have seen the apartheid wall winding its way through towns, cutting one side off from the other, I have talked to the Palestinians and the Israelis and witnessed their opposing ways of seeing the world.

I have demonstrated with Women in Black in the middle of West Jerusalem holding my sign saying "End the Occupation" high while cars drive by giving us the finger, tooting their horns and yelling abuse.

I have to say there was the occasional wave of support and our spirits were uplifted after we were joined by a group of percussionists drumming their hearts out and giving us something to jump around to.

I was thinking of heading to Jenin, the refugee camp completely destroyed in the last intifada to see a theatre group called Freedom Theatre, but I have just heard that their leader and founder, half-Jewish, half-Palestinian, was



Palestinian workers' everyday nightmare at Israeli checkpoints. A section of Israel's wall is visible in the background purportedly built as a security measure but in effect annexes occupied West Bank land.

Photo courtesy The Electronic Intifada

shot in 2011 by a fundamentalist Palestinian and given my very Jewish appearance, I am having second thoughts.

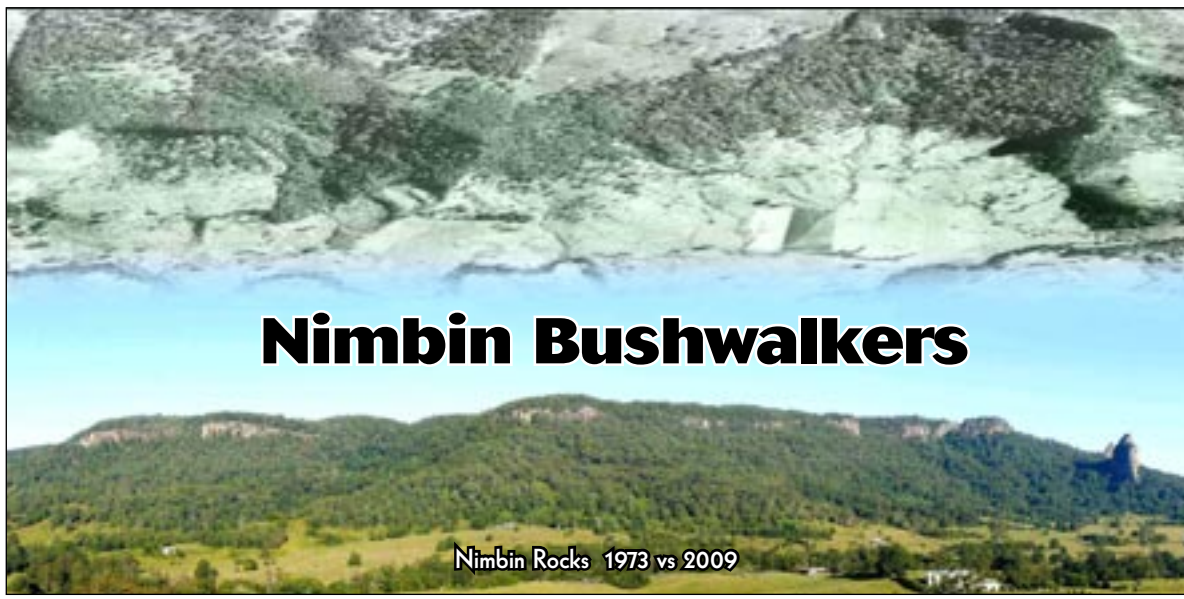
The highways here are modern, with overpasses and underpasses just like a German autobahn. The only difference is that on each side is a wall, unobtrusive on the side we can see but 8 metres high and topped with razor wire on the other, and if not a wall then a fence piled high with several rolls of razor wire.

The Palestinians who live on the other side have roads that meet the highway but cannot cross. There

are endless such stories.

We still have several days to go, each day hearing ever-more painful stories from a range of Jewish activists and victimised Palestinians. Some face imminent eviction from the home their families have lived in for generations, some are engaged in struggles for peace and the end to an apartheid regime.

Zionism is a secular movement that insists on Jewish supremacy, but how can a secular movement base its justification for the right to land on the belief that the land was promised to them by God?



Nimbin Bushwalkers

Nimbin Rocks 1973 vs 2009

For our first November walk six of us ventured into Mebbin National Park under an overcast sky to climb Brummies Lookout. We were led by octogenarian Tyalgum walks veteran, Elizabeth, who had gained access for our 4WD convoy through a locked gate up Condowie Road. Early on we encountered trees across the track, but thanks to my sturdy old Hilux and Michael's chains we cleared the blockage and drove to the start of the lookout track, barely marked by a few formed steps.

A short uphill trek through rocks between grass trees bought us to the 600-metre elevation summit. Unfortunately we did not spy any ground orchids nor birdwing butterflies, which Elizabeth said inhabit the peak. With one eye on the edge of the precipice we took in the spectacular views across to the west face of Mount Warning only four kilometres away, north to the Border Ranges and south-east

to the Byron Lighthouse. After a convivial lunch break we retraced our steps and visited the nearby Amaroo Flora Reserve, a virgin rainforest without logging tracks. A breaking thunderstorm persuaded us to cut short our exploration and negotiate the track back down Condowie Road before heavy rains made this more difficult. Brummies Peak and the surrounding rainforest have been put on our list for a future adventure. — **Bill Potter**

For the second walk in November, seventeen intrepid souls braved our final walk of the year through rainforest regeneration areas on Nimbin Rocks Co-operative. This was remarkable, because the walk preceded the club's



AGM, where numbers are usually low – attendees might be co-opted into doing something! The walk was tougher than expected, being led by Tony Trott, who wanted to show off his latest regeneration results, achieved with wife Lesley and Envite. And spectacular results they are, involving rugged areas untraversed by humankind for many years.

The Co-op's 600 acres lie below the cliffs on the west of Nimbin Valley, from the Johnston farm to the south to beyond Cathedral Rock to the north. The Co-op is thus, with our neighbour, Nulingah Aboriginal Land Council, custodian of the Sacred Sites. When the Co-op bought the property in 1980 it had long been heavily stocked with cattle. A 1973 aerial photo superimposed on a 2009 panorama shows how bare the place had been (pictured top left). The Co-op has maintained cattle to keep the pastures clean, but at low density to allow natural regeneration on the

Brummies Lookout and Nimbin Rocks Co-op walks

slopes – a policy that has worked well (pictured bottom left). Only at the turn of the century did Co-op members come to live here, institute tree planting, weed eradication, etc. Shortly, the Co-op hopes to complete an agreement whereby more than half of the property – all forested slopes and The Sacred Sites will be permanently protected as a Conservation Zone.

Our walk took us south across the slopes to a valley with a significant high quality rainforest remnant. For many years Tony and Lesley, with Co-op financial support, have been gradually regenerating areas adjoining this remnant, but over the last twelve months have had massive support from Envite – year one of a six-year grant. (funding from the



In the grotto

creek – huge expanses of dead lantana, through which, we now know, the rainforest will rapidly start to return. Thence up hill, into the shade and cool of the remnant of old-established rainforest, with its giant figs and lianas – hopefully the shape of things to come around it – a result of the inspirational efforts by our Co-op's rainforest regenerators



Through the dead lantana

NSW Environmental Trust). We walkers first enjoyed near-complete canopy in the earliest treated areas, then more recently cleared sections showing just how rapid natural regeneration of rainforest can be once lantana is cleared. Then a descent into the rugged depths, newly cleared, of our 'rainforest'

together with Envite. A wonderful area for future bush walkers to admire.

There will be no further club walks until February 2014. The report of our AGM will appear in the January 2014 *Nimbin Good Times*.

Happy Climate Change to you all.
— **Len Martin**

New Year, new moon, new world

by Marilyn Scott

Well another year is coming to an end. The days, weeks and months seem to move so quickly, yet this time last year seems such a long time ago.

I remember the day clearly, it was during the last quarter of 2012. I was with friends, discussing the "now". I looked up to the sky, that gorgeous Aussie blue, crowning a family of towering gums, and I saw it.

It was a big swirling circle in the sky, I guess a bit like a portal. I could see it, a New World literally birthing before my eyes.

I have no doubt that a new world is here, at least energetically. It just takes a while for the physical to catch up.

Yes, it's challenging at times, so much madness continuing to sprout, it certainly is a dark time for our beautiful land, probably the darkest since settlement when our dear Original Australians suffered such atrocities.

It really is time for peace. Everything in our human world needs to be changed from the inside out. Peace begins with us, each one of us; real peace, true peace, a connection to who we really



are.

Not a belief or a dogma but a true connection to the divine that exists in each one of us.

It's time for a revolution, an evolution of human beings. We've lost our way, the fighting, the wars, the greed, the lack of respect for life. Yes, it's gone on for so long we believe it's what has to be. It's not.

When we're born we're gifted with Life, not for long, a certain time we have here to experience, to learn and to enjoy.

What do we do with our lives? What is important? What do we strive for? What do we need?

Yes, it's easy to point to others, but what about "me"? What do I want, how do I live?

Do I fulfil the purpose for

which this life was given?

Do I feel gratitude every day, every moment for everything that is given to me?

This precious Earth, this amazing body, yes, we're at a tipping point and things need to be done, much needs to be changed, but our focus is so important.

We're all in this together, every person on this earth. I know we can do it, just as I know a new world has birthed. Physical energy is slow; it takes time to manifest the energy already in place.

We can have hope, we can have trust, we just need to take care of how we're directing our life, what we're focusing on, to what we give our precious energy. Life is a gift.

So yes... 2013 has been a massive year. I see it as the

first year of action after the birthing in 2012. Yes, on the big stage it's unbelievable, no wonder people are angry. But we're all in this together and we need to find solutions.

Beginning with our self is a good start.

The last quarter of the year always seems to be concentrated, like the energy of the year all bunched up at the "ending line".

This New Year's Day we're blessed with a New Moon, a time of new beginnings, extra energy to help us be clear on where we're heading. This auspicious New Moon sits with Pluto and Mercury, a powerful grouping.

An opportunity, maybe, to use our incredible gift of thought and reasoning to give birth to wholesome and sustainable ways of transforming the environment we find ourselves in.

Pluto joining the Sun and Moon is always a powerful gathering, but coming at this auspicious time I feel we're being given a gift, to allow our minds to receive the messages coming through.

I'm sure we are receiving masses of help. We can do it... I know we can.

Have a glorious, stupendous New Year!

Halloween Hi-jinx



The living dead turned up all over Nimbin on Halloween, in the Credit Union, the pub, even at the bus stop, mostly demanding lollies with menaces.

In the Nimbin version, there was little commitment to any sort of trick, and gifts of fruit were acceptable, sort of.



Fowl play attracts another Kodak moment

by Blossom

Driving through Nimbin one night, I found three Japanese tourists standing in the middle of the road with cameras on tripods and head-size flashes, taking photos of the roosters and chickens sleeping on the rockwall of the blister, with Nimbin Museum in the background.

Every time I go to Nimbin and park the car at the back of Museum, I am greeted by a happy bunch of feathered friends, all clucking the sounds of different Hellos.

The roosters and chickens living in our town are so used to having conversations with the hippies that some of the feathered flock are sounding almost human.

One rainbow-feathered rooster runs the length of the laneway squawking FAARRK at appropriate moments of mayhem.

Peace Park plays up when the pub closes – roosting chickens in the trees trill a contentment song.

Roosters are testosterone territorial trouble-makers.

The only time I saw a ruffle was when two large dogs growled at each other in passing, and two huge roosters tore out of the gutter. One bird grabbed the enlarged leech between the dog's paw splattering leech blood all over, and the other bird appeared to be pecking the dog's eyes, but



was aiming for the swollen paralysis tick by his ear.

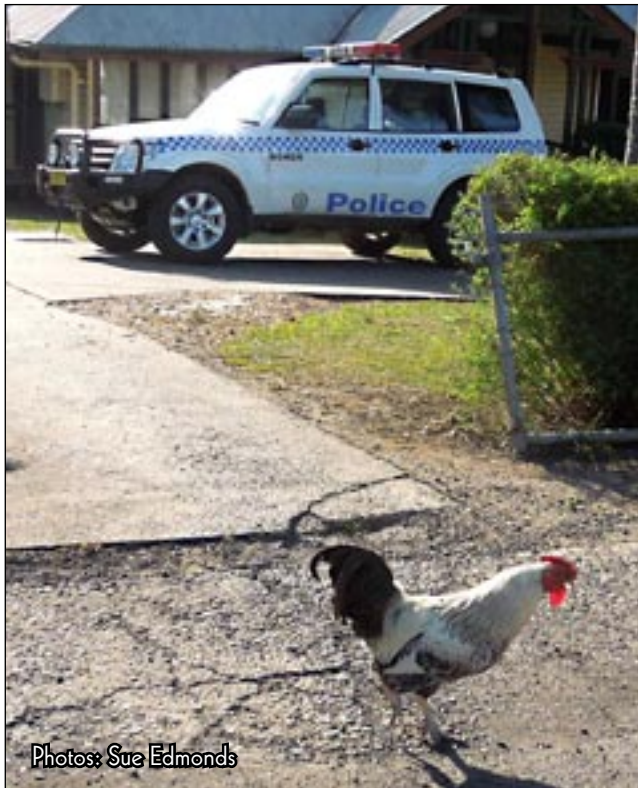
The dogs stopped snarling and, startled by the ruckus of the roosters, rolled over in submission, still and quiet, and the morning pathway traffic wondering at the magic of it all.

I have seen the huge hall rooster race to chase and eat the baby king brown snakes in the grass. I have watched the roosters round up the rats from under the rubbish.

No more horrid hairy caterpillars dropping out of trees onto the hairy hippies, no ticks in town, even the mosquito count is down, less Ross River and less Lymes disease incidences.

Even the large huntsmen are missing, and the crunchy cockroaches all gone. No more creepy crawly critters are coming out of cracks in Nimbin.

They are the most sociable lot of feathered



Photos: Sue Edmonds

fowl I have met, they look after our town.

There are less tourists sleeping in vans, as the car park is where the roosters check out the echoes as they crow under the vehicles as the sun rises. Even the homeless have left town – the chickens have claimed the best spots.

We are a lucky lot to have cheery chickens. We are safe – we have friends everywhere.

There are no peacocks on the buildings, no ducks mucking up the street, no goats leaping on the cars, and no real monkeys

anywhere.

We have our street cleaned and hosed every morning before the bakery opens, thanks to our devoted cleaners.

And I have witnessed a kindness from a dysfunctional human being, tending a chicken and 15 new born chicks by the church building on those hot days, with water and chic crumble for up to a week. (That's not dysfunctional, that's love and dedication to life.)

Reincarnation as a Rooster in Nimbin – we could be so lucky.

Putting the spooks in Mookx

You can be scared shitless, witless, scared to death or scared out of breath.

There are all sorts of scareds. I know. I had only just been born when they let some bloke I didn't know cut the end off my willy. A year or so later they nearly killed me with mercury poisoning in teething powders.

When I was four, a sado-superstitious 90-year-old nun had me in mortal fear of burning in Hell for all eternity if I used a word like "gosh", "crikey" or even "gee!" ... supposedly corruptions of "God", "Christ" and "Jesus".

I was one scared little kid. Then, my parents abandoned me in a strange, grey place for a tonsil operation. I screamed blue murder as the ward doors swung shut behind their departing figures, and I can still smell the chloroformed rag they put over my face.

I also recall my mother pretending to phone the "home with the cruel man with the whip", arranging to send me there if I refused to eat the over-boiled cabbage that made me want to spew, or a plateful of swede and turnip that turned my



Mookxamitosis

by Brendan (Mookx) Hanley

stomach.

It happened a lot. Not only was I scared, but it caused me to value myself as less important to them than the sloppy cabbage or bitter roots that were sitting stone cold on my plate. Talk about self esteem!

I was scared of aggressive dogs, big school bullies, evil-tempered teachers' liverish dispositions and cruel punishments. I was terrified of dentists, doctors, injections ... I used to fake illness and stay home on "jab" days.

I even threw tanties being dragged to the barber with the whirring electric clippers

so close to my face, head, brain!

Then there was WW2, Atomic Bombs, polio, TB and diphtheria. My policeman father was an angry man up until about age 40, at which time they slung him in the Melbourne Police Hospital to cure his nervous breakdown with three months of electric shocks to the brain.

They spewed him out at the end of it wearing snowy white hair and being about one quarter of the man who went in.

I was never afraid of him again.

I found other things to be scared of. Leaving school and joining the big, bad world, the whole socio-sexual arena and game-play, police, fights, being busted, banks and mortgages, bosses, city traffic, relatives and friends having accidents, getting sick or dying.

Recently I spent 52 hours alone in a two-room beachside bure (cabin) in Taveuni, Fiji, as Hurricane Tomas raged around me with torrential rain and up to 200 kph winds.

The bure was filling with water while sheets

of galvanised roofing iron and coconut trees flew past outside and bits kept getting ripped off the building with each new onslaught.

No power or communication with the outside world during the whole thing, and global electronic isolation for nine days afterwards. I really got to feel scared this time.

Now I'm scared of Facebook. I can't browse trauma-free through my friends' posts any more. From Fukushima to fluoride, CSG, chemtrails and climate change, drones and drugs, GMOs and Global warming, monsters like Monsanto and Munsters like Tony Abbott ... it's a daily dose of doom and gloom, despair and desperation.

And yet, any true Buddhist will tell you it's all okay, everything is unfolding according to the Divine Plan.

It's kinda like this! It's true that without the motor car and the petroleum/gas industries we'd be saved most of this planetary pollution and destruction.

But on the other hand, without the automobile, we could be up to our necks in horse shit!

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Nimbin Garden Club party notes

by Gill Jones

The Nimbin Garden Club celebrated the end of another interesting gardening year at Jarlanbah's community centre on a wet Saturday in November.

A happy group of around 30 people enjoyed great salads, prawns and bonhomie throughout the hail-swept afternoon. We are very grateful for all the fabulously inspiring garden visits of 2013, with the places in this valley being very alluring and nourishing to all who visit.

With hailstorms, drought and floods, our plants need to be robust and our soils rich to ensure the strength of our plants' survival. The support between members to help us all become better gardeners is part of the enjoyment of the Club, as well as meeting new friends and old acquaintances.

With interesting gardens to visit in 2014 as well as a proposal to help



maintain a community facility, we welcome new members and friends. Even if you don't have a garden but enjoy looking at beautiful spaces, please join us on the third Saturday of the month, starting in February.

Watch for our article each month in the NGT.

Email: nimbingardens@gmail.com



Nimbin Holiday Club summer program

by Sophie Macken

These summer holidays, we will be operating the Holiday Club program from the Youth Connections Building in Nimbin. On excursion days, please meet us in the Nimbin Central School car

park at 9am.

The program runs for children aged 5 - 12, and the day runs between 9am and 3pm. The basic fee is \$12 per day, and more on excursion days. Please read the dates and venues below carefully and book to avoid

disappointment.

To book phone NNIC on 6689-1692 (between 10 am and 4 pm) or if you can't get through, text Sophie on 0411-203-508.

Please ensure that your child wears appropriate clothing, covered shoes,

brings a hat, and has adequate food and drinks. Parents must sign consent forms for any excursions.

Nimbin Holiday Club is an Out of School Hours (OOSH) service, funded by the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

| Date | Program | Cost |
|---------------------------------------|---|------|
| Monday 30 th December | Excursion to Lismore Skating Rink and Heritage Park Skating followed by lunch and play at Heritage Park. Ride on the mini train! <i>Sophie and Ajita</i> | \$22 |
| Tuesday 31 st December | Nimbin Youth Club, Park, Pool and Skate Park Please bring swimmers, food and water. DVDs, Art, Craft, Games, Music, PIRATE ART AND DRESS-UP! <i>Sophie and Ajita</i> | \$12 |
| Thursday 2 nd January | Nimbin Youth Club, Park, Pool and Skate Park Please bring swimmers, food and water. DVDs, Art, Craft, Games, Music, DRAMA GAMES AND COOKING! <i>Sophie and Alex</i> | \$12 |
| Friday 3 rd January | Excursion to Murrwillumbah - Cinema and Sweetnam Park Movie fun at the Regent Cinema and then to Sweetnam Park for play, a creek paddle and games. Please bring food and water. <i>Sophie and Alex</i> | \$25 |
| Monday 6 th January | Nimbin Youth Club, Park, Pool and Skate Park Please bring swimmers, food and water. DVDs, Art, Craft, Games, Music, DRAMA GAMES AND MONSTER ART! <i>Sophie and Ajita</i> | \$12 |
| Wednesday 8 th January | Excursion to Flat Rock Beach and Macadamia Castle Bring swimmers, lunch and a change of clothes. After the beach we go to Macadamia Castle. Price includes train ride and feeding bags for the animals. <i>Sophie and Alex</i> | \$12 |
| Thursday 9 th January | Nimbin Youth Club, Park, Pool and Skate Park Please bring swimmers, food and water. DVDs, Art, Craft, Games, Music and ICE-CREAM CREATIONS DAY! <i>Sophie and Alex</i> | \$25 |
| Friday 10 th January | Nimbin Youth Club, Park, Pool and Skate Park Please bring swimmers, food and water. DVDs, Art, Craft, Games, Music, CAKE DECORATING AND MONSTER ART! <i>Sophie and Ajita</i> | \$12 |
| Tuesday 14 th January | Excursion to Protectors Falls Please bring a drink, swimmers, change of clothes and walking shoes. A yummy vego lunch will be provided. We will be taking the bushwalk to the bottom of the falls. Picnic and music time too. <i>Sophie and Ajita</i> | \$20 |
| Wednesday 15 th January | Nimbin Youth Club, Park, Pool and Skate Park Please bring swimmers, food and water. DVDs, Art, Craft, Games, Music, LAST DAY TREASURE HUNT! <i>Sophie and Alex</i> | \$12 |

Ship of Fools

And on the ship of Fools
The cry goes up
"Turn back the boats".

Yes, on the ship of Fools
The open seas
Are seen as moats!

And the press-ganged crew
They curse and swear
They beat their chest
They pull their hair
– And on the frothy foam
Within their throats
They bleat they bleat they bleat like goats
"Turn back the boats".
"Turn back the boats".

But the boats they are not turning
The seas may be hot and burning
The thronging people just keep returning
For the new ways they are yearning
There seems to be no learning
Of a chorus they are spurning
"Turn back the boats,
Turn back the boats"

On the ship of Fools
The captain shouts out louder now
His eye-ball rolls
Blood beads on his brow
Cracks the whip
Within the ship
Rants and raves
To the galley slaves
"Turn back the boats"
"Turn back the boats"

But a plank has sprung
They've lost the bung
There's people in the water
Husband and wife – a loving son
And – oh no! – a little daughter.

The armour-plated fleet may be in the
harbour
Abbott Bishop singing ardour
– Snouts in trough, Harry in the larder
– But here comes a great small-ship armada
Yea! A brand new Pope – the Big Enchilada
Breath of fresh air – even he is praying
harder.

Not all can walk on water and –
Aye – the law of the sea be the law of the
land –
A true sailor never lets another soul drown!
A true blue Captain never lets another soul
drown!

Compassion – it's no rum ration –
It's oceanic – never ever (gasp!) out of
fashion.
Never ever deemed (gasp!) out of fashion
Never ever ruled to be out of fashion!

But with Operation Sovereign Border
We've lost any sense of human order.

On the ship of Fools
The Captain rants
The Captain raves
British born
The world is ours
We rule the waves
Always free
Always free
And never slaves

Never slaves
– expect to some outmoded sense
– of who we are
– and where we are
– and when to extend a helping hand
– for lives to save.

Aye, never slaves

Turn back the votes!
Turn back the votes!

Our darling little daughter is –
Turn back the votes.
– just within reach –
Turn back the votes.
– if you act now.

Here is my hand, Acushla.

– Bruce Rayburn

Election fraud mars Honduran elections

by Warwick Fry

Tens of thousands of LIBRE party supporters were out on the streets of Honduras on Election Day, 23rd November, swarming around the polling booths, directing people and traffic at the approaches to the polling stations.

The red flags of LIBRE hung from the windows of the taxis and the back of pickup trucks taking cheering supporters to the vote. It was a massive presence that dwarfed the blue-clad National Party supporters.

Swedish Dick and his Honduran partner and videographer Miriam wave gaily and shout some indecipherable Honduran political joke to yet another group of enthusiastic, red-shirted supporters.

Dick and Miriam seemed to know everyone – everyone wearing a red shirt, that is.

It probably goes back to the days immediately following the 2009 coup. The couple provided important video and print coverage of the massive popular street demonstrations that erupted spontaneously and continued unabated for weeks, sporadically for months.

It was this movement that generated the FNRP, the National Front for Popular Resistance – which in turn, gave birth to the LIBRE party, its political wing.

LIBRE (Party of Liberation and Refoundation, also Spanish for "free") has undeniable popularity.

For a newly formed political party to find itself in the position of being able to challenge a dominant two party political monopoly in barely two years is unprecedented.

So Dick and Miriam knew these people from the heady days of the popular resistance to the 2009 coup, taking heart-stopping footage and reporting eyewitness accounts of police and military teargas attacks, beatings, and even shootings, of FNRP demonstrators.

After turning yet another corner where our press car was cheered by another group of cheering redshirts, Dick said, "We are journalists, but we are not neutral. We are objective, but we are not neutral."

As he parked the car and locked it, he remarked, "This is

a very dangerous neighbourhood Warwick – gangs, criminals, all kinds of strange people..." Miriam gave me a wink.

We were on our way to meet a group of LIBRE activists whom I couldn't resist labelling "Honduras' political bikies". The gang (actually a club) calling themselves the LIBRE Motorised Brigade (with a flag to prove it) probably couldn't have gone up against the Comancheros, but they certainly had the attitude.

Halfway up the street a bike shop had been converted into a LIBRE party campaign headquarters, Dick was greeted with a bear hug by the leader.

A gesture, and all lined up to meet us with a raised helmet salute. A series of rousing chants ("United, the people will never be defeated") and some call and response slogans, and then we settled into some serious political analysis.

It all seemed to be going well for (LIBRE Presidential candidate) Xiomara Castro Sarmiento. A group of Blues (National Party supporters) across the road had given up and gone home, we were told; the support for LIBRE was so evidently strong in this neighbourhood.

Then they were off on a mission. Dick told me that in the days of the post-coup demonstrations, these guys provided lookouts and security for the protest marchers. Today they were cruising around the booths and picking up stragglers.

The day was festive, the mood among LIBRE supporters quietly optimistic. At the media centre at the Hotel Clarion they progressed from exuberance to euphoria as the pie chart graph on the wall screens showed the vote for Xiomara grow from respectable to threatening the blue wedge of the Nationals.

When Xiomara arrived to announce that she was the president-elect, I had to choose between putting my hands over my ears to protect them from the deafening din, or around my ribs, to protect them from the elbows of the ravaging media pack.

And then it happened: the Electoral Tribunal stepped in and declared the National Party candidate, Juan Orlando



On 1st December, one of LIBRE's 'political bikies' (Motorizados) was murdered by four paramilitaries in ski masks, who shot him down on the street. His coffin was paraded through the rally the next day, in front of the open vehicle carrying Xiomara and Mel Zelaya, who made very powerful speeches over the coffin when the march stopped in front of the Electoral Tribunal HQ.



Mel Zelaya and LIBRE leaders

Hernandez, president.

The tribunal did this by the simple expedient of not recognising 20% of the vote.

Taxi drivers, waiters, middle class professionals, all beg me to let the world know that the election was stolen by a bunch of greedy crooks.

Video evidence of electoral fraud shows differences between the signed tallies by scrutineers and the figures put out by the Electoral Tribunal. Zeros have been removed, and ones added. For example, 180 votes for LIBRE had been changed to 18, and votes for the Nationals changed from 8 to 180.

At a press conference on Friday night, Xiomara Castro Zelaya presented evidence that over 800,000 votes had been compromised. She called on International bodies to call the Electoral Tribunal to account.

There was again a call to defend Xiomara's victory in the streets.

If the Electoral Tribunal refuses to accept the evidence, and people do take to the streets, there will almost certainly be a repeat of the



Riot cops outside the hotel after Mel Zelaya's press conference

vicious and bloody repression this long-suffering country experienced in 2009.

Warwick Fry reports on Central American affairs on 'Latin Radical' on Nim-FM, 2-4pm Saturdays.

Nimbin Crossword Solution From Page 22



Clarification – Women's Wisdom Circles



The article 'Great pyramid or pie in the sky?' by Jimi Wollumbin (NGT November 13, p.7), regarding the formation of a local Women's Wisdom Circle, was edited from 1600 words to 500 words and re-titled without permission from the author, and the accompanying image was not chosen or approved by the author.

The image (at left) should have been credited. It shows the painting 'The Gift' by Evan Android Jones, created to express his concerns about women's gifting circles: "I made this image to show the inevitability of what's going to happen to a lot of good people eventually." (androidjones.com)

Despite Mr Wollumbin's ambivalence, issues with women's gifting circles have been identified as: "The illegality, the tax issues, the math that indicates most women will lose money, the secrecy." – Alexis Neely, eyeswideopenlife.com
NGT advises extreme caution before entering into such schemes. – Ed



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| 12.00pm | 12.35pm * | 2.35pm | 3.10pm |
| 2.35pm | 3.10pm | 5.30pm | 6.00pm |
| 3.20pm | 4.15pm | | |
| 5.30pm | 6.00pm | | |
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| 9.00am | 9.35am | 12.45pm | 1.15pm * |
| 12.45pm | 1.15pm * | 3.25pm | 4.10pm |
| 3.25pm | 4.10pm | 6.05pm | 6.35pm |
| 4.25pm | 5.00pm | | |
| 6.05pm | 6.35pm | | |

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Meeting Brian Monk

by Maria Rose

I'm driving with Brian Monk (pictured) towards his 5,000-acre property on the edge of Tara. The car pitches and lurches over potholes, sending clouds of dust up behind us.

When we get to his property, there are three sets of gates we have to unlock and lock again before continuing—a quite literal example of locking the gate. The land here is flat and brown, punctuated with trees and kangaroos darting across the path. We suddenly pass a large swathe of clear-cut area, the soil turned over and trees shredded in piles. It's wide and continues further than I can see.

"What's that?" I ask. "They have to build the pipeline there," he says, glancing over briefly, unfazed, before looking back at the road.

"Through your property?" "Yeah." He shakes his head. Brian has lived on this property for almost eleven years with his wife Carol, son Dave, daughter-in-law Cathy, and seven grandchildren.

After an arrival bustling with 'hellos' and introductions, I watch an episode of Spiderman with the kids and then we milk the cows, meet the dogs, and talk about movies. After dinner, Brian points out a vivid red light on the far horizon. It's dark on the front porch and the light shines clearly and brightly, despite passing through a film of smog from the processing plants.

"I call it the Eye of Sauron," Brian says. The stars are bright and scattered like sand across the expanse of sky, but all I can see is that red light.

The next day, Brian takes me to look at the gas fields. "That's a gas well there," he points. "That's as close as they could get the gas well to where they intended it to be—on our property. Now we see it every time we drive through the gate."

He says that Queensland Gas Company (QGC) requested to drill one exploration hole and indicated that Brian's property was one of the first they had visited in the area. At this early stage, there was no definitive evidence of gas, so QGC was effectively exploring for it. Brian and his family made the decision to not let them drill.

"They painted the picture that this gas would just be a hole in the ground and they probably wouldn't find gas, which we know now is a lie," Brian says. "We said no."

Brian recalls a government report that said there are 30 gas wells within ten kilometres of his property. There is a two-kilometre zone in place that prevents gas wells from being too close to private properties, but Brian doesn't feel this is enough. He describes an example of three different people who developed pancreatic cancer in a short period of time, and who all lived very close to the two-

kilometre zone near a holding pond.

"For three people to develop that kind of cancer in that close an area is just not possible. So what's the common factor?"

Many landowners who were approached early on felt as though they had no choice but to agree to let the industries drill, Brian describes. Industries would often take landowners to land court try to get permission to come on to the land.

"They would basically do to our land what they wanted to and we would have no say, and that was when we really resisted the idea," Brian says dryly. "People didn't like to be told they had no say. People didn't like to have their health risked with no say, with no opinion."

One of the biggest problems Brian has faced is the water. When the family first moved on to the property, they used bore water for everything but drinking—showers, cooking, feeding the cattle. Shortly after the drilling and fracking began, they began to experience changes in the water. The first incident was when two of the grandchildren took a bath and, a little while after entering, started to scream.

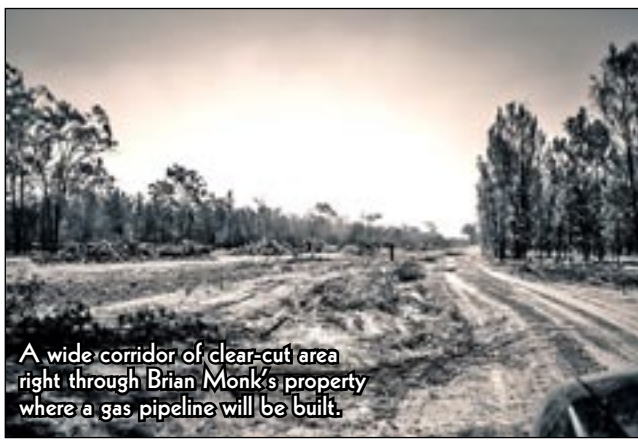
"They got burned skin," Brian remembers. "Not literally as in blisters, but their legs and up to their bellies were red and raw. It burned you, like an irritant. Like a sunburn, almost."

Soon after that, they stopped bathing in the water, instead buying tanks for tank water and relying on their dam that collects rainwater. The last straw, however, was when the cattle refused to drink or go near the water. They shut the bore off then. One evening, one of Brian's friends suggested checking to see if Brian's bore was flammable. The methane and gas leaking through the water was coming at high enough levels that the water started to catch fire, a sight that is now the subject of many of Dave's YouTube films about CSG.

But when Brian asked government representatives to come test and check his water, they all said it was gas-free. Government inspectors eventually came and tested the bore, saying they would leave if Brian tried to set it on fire.

"We thought they were going to come out and say, 'your water bore's got gas, we'll fix that,'" Brian says, visibly incredulous. "But they said your water bore hasn't got gas in it. They've stuck to that line for two years, and now they're saying there's no gas at a flammable level. But you've seen the footage."

He mimics how they tested the water, holding the equipment close to the water, and then pulling it away just as the detection equipment started to beep and report signs of methane.



A wide corridor of clear-cut area right through Brian Monk's property where a gas pipeline will be built.

Brian's contaminated water bore hasn't been the only thing the industries refuse to take responsibility for. The health issues in the family have increased drastically. The family, usually the children, experiences headaches, red eyes, nosebleeds, and nausea regularly, and Brian speculates it's because of the toxins in the air, which vary depending on which way the wind is blowing. Doctors have also found a growth in Brian's head that developed around when they had to stop using the bore two years ago. One day he was a full time worker, the next, he was subsisting on a pension.

But the topic that seems to strike a chord most with Brian is his grandson, who has started having seizures. The seizures also started when the bore was closed, and although nothing can be definitively be linked to the bore, his grandson's room was the closest part of the house to the bore.

Brian explains that his commitment to fighting CSG drilling stopped being about him or his farm long ago. Instead, he now fights for his grandchildren's well being and to inform other people, so they don't experience the same thing.

"Other people don't have to hold their grandchildren in seizures and watch their lips turn blue," he says. He stops talking suddenly, wipes his eyes, and holds his breath. I look down at my notes. "I literally cannot speak about my grandchildren without crying," he says in a strained voice, after a moment.

"This is not me, this is not the role that I chose," he continues. "But I think I'm here because I'm meant to be here, I'm here because I'm a cantankerous old prick who loves his grandchildren, and I'm here because I can make noise about it."

We drive on and pull into the driveway of a processing plant to do a U-turn. But in the corner of my eye, I see two bright orange flames, unbelievably large and bright, towering in the distance. I point them out to Brian.

"Those are flares!" he gapes and opens the door. "I've never seen them so big. And in the day time?" He's amazed. "They've never been that size before, ever. Shit!"

Flares are long smokestacks used to burn excess methane, often releasing toxic fumes into the air. The brighter the flame and the more intense the color



is, the more toxic the material is. It's 2pm, and these flames are a vivid orange.

We get out of the car to take photos. After we get back in to drive away, I start to feel breathless. Dizzy. Like I just ran five miles as fast as I can in this sun. My mouth is dry. Am I carsick? I wonder. I must be. There's no way that could have happened from the plant. I recall the research I've done about getting sick from toxins released into the air.

I explain how I'm feeling to Brian, and he says, his voice level and low, "The wind was blowing towards us. Hydrogen sulfide can kill you with one breath at 700 parts per million. There's probably some of that in there. You're not used to this kind of toxic environment. I can't prove it's the gas," he looks briefly out the window towards where the flares were, "but tell me you don't think it's related."

I wake up on my last morning and nearly jump in fright when I look at my eyes in the mirror – they're bloodshot red in a way I've never seen before. Brian's words echo back to me – "You're not used to this kind of toxic environment" – and I peer closer in disbelief.

I was warned about this kind of reaction: red eyes, nausea, nose bleeds. And indeed, as Brian drives me towards Dalby and we discuss more about how the industry comes into people's property, a small trickle of blood slips over my lip, and I grab a tissue to stem the flow. "My nose is bleeding," I'm surprised at how surprised my voice sounds.

"Yeah," he says. "That happens."

I say goodbye to Brian in a McDonald's as we buy coffee – it's about 6.30am. He wishes me good luck for my trip back to Lismore and I do the same, though I can't help but feel he'll need more luck for his fights than I will for mine.

• Maria Rose is a university student from New York. This article is an excerpt from her academic dissertation.

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