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2016

NIMBIN MARDIGRASS

CANNABIS LAW REFORM RALLY & GATHERING



What happened, man?

High and low times at MardiGrass



by Michael Balderstone

Here's a list of my thoughts on this year's MardiGrass, plusses and minuses, in no particular order.

- Meeting Michael Lambert who has an epileptic daughter and talked his loaded dad (his words) into giving \$34 million to Sydney Uni for research. He was an ever-smiling happy and positive fellow whose optimism was infectious, even if GW Pharma have pushed their nose into the research trough.
- The creep who stole all the Canna-donated deckchairs on Sunday night. If you see them anywhere, let us know at the Embassy please.
- The brave effort by S. Sorrensen and Alan Glover on Saturday night in the Hall with their annual comedy routine turned into HOSS, the HEMP Olympix Sports Show. A great success from all reports and a courageous creative effort, exactly what we are good at.
- The thousands of people looking to buy weed, but everyone was too scared to sell, so people everywhere were taking... acid was it? The police in the village were reasonable in the main and good humoured, but their very presence stops everyone who usually does from selling pot. Its the hardest weekend of the year to buy the bulky smelly herb in our village and as a consequence a lot of people

took other easily hidden pills or powders. And this is exactly why cannabis needs to be separated from other illegal drugs. The dried herb cannabis is so different to all the other chemical or processed illegal drugs, and it's ridiculous that the police have to treat pot the same as ice.

- It's very unfortunate for the local cops that the RDT are directed from Sydney so they get left to face the anger we all feel about it when the patrols go back into their hole. The Americans were here to tell us there is no drug testing of drivers in America unless an obviously impaired driver is seen by police and their road toll in states that have legal pot has gone down if anything. Wake up Australia, we're being led up the garden path on this by the police. It's nonsense and clearly pushing people to use other drugs which are dangerous.
- On the positive side we've worked out how to beat the police in the tug 'o drug war. Our Polite bare feet gripped while the Police boots slid. The tug on the big hemp rope at midday Saturday to start the HEMP Olympix was the toughest ever. We won one each and the third pull-off was a titanic struggle where we were locked for ages before the cops' slippery boots lost it for them. The barefoot hippies' toes dug into the soft earth, and it was great victory against all odds with 12 burly police

Stoned chess championships marred

by Simon Rose, tournament director

The 2016 World Stoned Chess Championship at MardiGrass started with such promise: a great size tent fronting the heart of Cullen Street, a magnificent sign inspired by Elspeth, and at the outset there were many players keen to get the tournament underway.

By 1pm we had all 10 boards occupied and people waiting for a game. The vibe was easy and relaxed, but soon after the energy was transformed by two events.

Firstly, the electronic music set up on the museum site and dominating MardiGrass with its position, volume and crassness, made playing chess or simply enjoying the hippy vibe that is Nimbin near impossible.

Secondly the chess championship was raided by four police officers who bravely apprehended a young man quietly smoking a

joint and playing chess. I think he was from Scandinavia. He was never seen again.

After this, the word of the raid got around and the championship had its energy marred.

All up there were 37 individual players, with international contestants from France, England, Norway, Japan, Germany and Singapore.

The winner of the chess was the 2013 World Champion Simon, who played 8 games for 7 wins and 1 loss, the last game being against a previously unbeaten hopeful with a record of 5 wins and no losses, played in complete darkness using the phone torch to finish the game.

Although he never finished a game, the title of World Stoned Chess Champion has been awarded to the young Scandinavian warrior who was carted off for merely doing the right thing by satisfying the conditions of entry of the tournament.

Glover and Sorrensen host the Hemp Olympix joint rolling championship



Broadcaster, bong thrower and political aspirant, Derryn Hinch with Uncle Cec.



(or 11 plus Inspector Nicole) who had a fair bit of downhill to help them also. Let's see them take their boots off next year.

- The band that travelled from Brisbane and never got to play because they were the last gig in the hall on Sunday night and the DA expired at 10pm and we were running late. Tragic and terrible, we'll try and make it up to them next year.
- Our local street cleaners are always a highlight for me. Uncomplaining and ever-helpful, cleaning up massive early morning messes for about five days in a row.
- The recycling skip with little holes that the bins could not fit into to empty!
- Derryn Hinch charmed all like a true politician, and enjoyed Nimbin a lot by all accounts. He went arse over tit in the bong throw, spilling the water all over himself. Next attempt the bong only went 8 metres but he was a real sport about it all and limped through the Rally uncomplaining in his new 100% handwoven hemp shirt from Cambodia.
- The Doof which took over the middle of town which we didn't plan. Many enjoyed it but many didn't, and the World Stoned Chess Championship had to try and concentrate against it and they ruined Chris's light show and weekend by moving him, and the Mingle Park program had to battle their heavy beat all weekend. Too self-centred, just seeing their own little scene and not the whole picture. Never again.
- The return of Mr Walker, aka the Plantem, Prohibition End, Bob Hopkins, the creator of MardiGrass and the HEMP Embassy. Typical Bob, he worked the whole weekend helping, including hours at the Showground gate. It was terrific to have him around to see what's happened to the seed he planted 24

years ago. And he told me it was French Sam who came up with the idea of calling it the HEMP Embassy all those years ago.

- The lunatic with the trailer in the Sunday parade that ran over people including a child. Jungle Patrol is awesome but we always need and depend on locals to help whenever they see dramas, just like on any other day in the village. We need lots more locals to join Jungle Patrol. Heidi does an amazing job every year. Do talk to her about helping next time. The majority of our volunteers are from overseas and don't know this country or our local culture.
- The locals who get furious when we are setting up for MardiGrass in the few days before. We copped some serious abuse. We try hard to be low impact until just before the weekend and have to make this quick changeover, especially on the Thursday and Friday before.
- Huge apologies to the parents especially who were upset by the crude language from the hip hop crew at the skatepark. They were a Sydney crew and many people loved them, but many were also upset by their language. We won't let them come back, or certainly not near the 'youth club'.
- Many thanks to the hundreds who appear every year and do their bit to make MardiGrass work. Finally, we have a shaft of light appearing at the end of the prohibition tunnel, and there's no stopping it growing now.

CENTRESPREAD OVER PAGE

Thanks to all our brilliant photographers: Brian Alexander, Peter Chaplin, Bob Dooley, Marion Goffin, Mark Jago, Garry Mimlich, Peter P., Sue Stock, Diana Tissot, Melissa Williamson. We love your work!

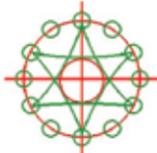


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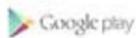
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A message of hope...

by Dionne May

So this is the land of the lucky. The land of plenty. Our bellies are overfull, the TV is on and the cup of billy tea runneth over.

Stories about boat people, Syria, tragedy, war and yes even Hemp prohibition, are perhaps upsetting but dismissable in the face of our own petty worries. And primarily in Australia 2016 it seems those worries are all about money. Never having enough, and how we look or compare to everybody else.

In the land of opportunity have we all forgotten the land and the cost to our planet, mindlessly shopping, mindlessly raping her for limited and dangerous resources? Why has technology and unlimited information crushed all the battlers and the fighting spirit out of Aussies? Where is the 'fair go' morality and ethics in this economic pleasure dome we call Australia? Fun for all, as long as you pay the price... a life time of work, discontent, unhappiness and a fucked planet and future.

I'm truly gutted by my homeland and the powers that be. I grew up in a freer Australia. A wilder Australia. Mates were mates, the underdog was the hero and you could always trust in getting a fair go. What the fuck happened to my Australia?

It's Mardi Grass 2016... Nimbin is prepared again to send a message of hope out into the world. A message of hope and encouragement for all those forgotten Aussies and their children needlessly suffering while our parochial government twiddle their fingers and mill around too afraid to have some balls and make a stand in the face of the overwhelming evidence supporting medicinal cannabis, nutritious hemp seeds and hemp agriculture. Stalling bastards with their business mates doing dodgy deals. Old outdated English laws



that are impossible to change. It's so well known it's not even news... but some days it makes me cry.

But who is going to complain, let alone fight in this lethargic, blinkered, overweight self indulging culture?

I was in Brisbane last Sunday night putting up posters for MardiGrass in the Fortitude Valley mall. The wary reaction was predictable, so too the enthusiastic reaction some hours and some drinks later. Sigh. The streets were filling with more and more drunk and angry youth, now mostly gathered around the only food outlets open... a pie shop and kebab shop side by side. The gutter was piled high with litter from these two shops. With no bin supplied, the youth carelessly drop their trash on the ground. I am standing in the streets of my country, but it feels like India.

I look across the road and four Qld police officers are standing shoulder to shoulder with their arms crossed. Watching... me! So with littering a passable offence these days it seems, I'm still damn sure if I had lit a joint, those boys in blue would have been moving fast.

The taxi driver tells us that the police could not stop so many people from littering so now they no longer bother and a street sweeper comes through and cleans up after they have gone. "Is this

what our ANZACs fought for?" I think as I gaze out into the light-polluted night sky of Brisbane?

My adult children both smoke pot. They wouldn't rubbish the streets, but we are outcasts to our family and communities because of this choice. Made to feel like criminals for making a healthier choice than legal poisonous alcohol, pharmaceuticals or chemical drugs.

So this year I want something different. I want a 'Wake The Fuck

Up' app. I want all doctors, nurses, carers, nutritionists, paramedics, police and politicians to be educated about cannabis. They can download for free! The *National Geographic* magazine featuring 'Marijuana... The New Science', a concise, twenty-six page compelling cannabis article that should be available in every waiting room... information where it is needed. A healthier choice for intelligent people to decide for themselves.

You have all only learnt what you have been told to learn.

You all say what you have been told to say.

You all think what you have been told to think.

You have no voice and no character and your children are downloading "How To Grow Marijuana" apps, watching hypocrisy, belligerence and greed rule Australia. They are too young to be so full.

In India there is a belief that when the cup is full it must be emptied. For a full cup can take no more, access will merely run out over the lip and be wasted. Only emptied it will be satisfied, refreshed and content... ready for more fresh tea, fresh hope and an Australia we can all be proud of.

Change the law and change the future.

Unda joins the clippers

'Clippers Unite' is a new wanderers site where people travel the planet trimming crops. Professional trimmers.

The obsessed Peter Dutton met me at one of Malcolm's events and is now pursuing me to track down the backpackers who are illegally earning thousands on non-working visas trimming weed. He lays awake at night plotting how to catch them, he told me.

"As an ex-cop, I know how drugs destroy lives," he tells me, eyes popping out of his head. "Not only are these druggies not supposed to be working, they're all paid in illegal cash."

It's always drugs to him. No difference between the substances. If they're illegal and it's drugs it's his job to hunt them down, and he's not questioning daddy's orders. Malcolm told me he's boring as batshit. Sits there at the gathering ramrod straight, eyes bulging. The living pressure cooker, he calls him.

Dutton bores into me with those exploding eyeballs. "We're tightening up everywhere and arrivals to Oz now have to show how much cash they have and will spend here. The noose is closing on these cheats now." He's a hunter, a soldier at war, and totally believes in it. Very unsettling it was.

Money rules wherever you look. I told him ISIS has joined up with the Mafia smuggling weed through Africa to Europe but he refused to believe it. "Catholics joining with ISIS? Not possible!" he almost laughed. Money is

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

more powerful, I told him and it's true.

In Canberra they keep on about recreational versus medicinal and I keep asking 'em where the boundary is. Great conversations.

"So Peter, you'd agree we could call it a medicine if it stops epileptic seizures?" "Yeaaaaa..." Hesitantly.

"What about Parkinson's shakes?" Silence. "What about a headache? Now he stares at me.

"What about kids after school smoking bongs to relax?" Now he's glaring.

"Don't be ridiculous," he says. "You're not suggesting we let children smoke?"

No No NO, but if a two-year old epileptic has no bad reactions and in fact likes the side effects, maybe it's better for teens than pinching grog from their parents' cupboard?"

I told him about the woman I met at the MardiGrass talks from Canada, born with her feet backwards, who then suffered massive operations followed by addiction to opiates before weaning herself off them, and now only smokes weed. The Dutton gets furious and his brow folds in a circle and his third eye becomes a target. Could be ripples from a stone in a pond, but I see a target. We see what we want to see. Some see a pile of woodchip and profit, others see a forest.

I caught the train back to the Bin from Griffith where I've been trimming with the Clippers who got too suspicious because I was so slow.

"Never done this before, Bethany?" asked the buxom German girl who thankfully went straight on to brag about all her years of experience. "I've been to Humboldt the last four seasons," she told me. "And zen I have work in Amsterdam whenever I want". She was like a gun shearer. She told me some growers make them work naked so nothing can be stashed away. The buds are gorgeous, big fat bulbs the girls trim to perfection. They get an allowance of two grams a day, not enough for me.

Back on the street I know so well, I scored from the dealers on the same old impossible mission. Find the Big Fish. I already know what I'll be writing and might even cut'n'paste it from last year's report. Its a unique scene which continues to totally baffle the authorities. "Who's in charge?" is the endless question, and after thirty years in the area I still don't have an answer of course, because there is none. The hippie kids are sharing and it just doesn't fit into any framework they have, but they refuse to admit it. The fact that there's no top dog in the Bin's weed world is what keeps me in a job.