

# Tell your story at Blue Knob Farmers Market

by Marie Cameron

The Blue Knob Farmers Market started the month of September with the Trash and Treasure Extravaganza, and what a success it was. People stayed and played for hours and many a treasure found the light of day.

The market ended the month with two days in Sustainable Alley at the Nimbin Country Show. There the market launched its new brochure and flew its heart high as the BKFM logo. The 12 dozen biscuits baked and given away by Eric Smith were thoroughly enjoyed!

For the month of October the market is ready to slow down and enjoy the finer things in life with a storytelling series: 'Tell me a Story'.

Since the beginning of time people have sat around the fire and told stories. It is with thanks to storytellers that legends have lived beyond time. Cultures have held strong to their origins. Stories of love and birth, catastrophes and hard times all bring instant replay to the drama of being human.

'Tell me a Story' is designed to offer narrators the opportunity to practice this oldest of crafts. For story lovers, it's the opportunity to sit in a quiet space and simply listen to a story.

The series will be held on five consecutive Saturday mornings in the Moore Workshop Space at the Blue Knob Hall Gallery, 719 Blue Knob Road (Cnr Lillian Rock Road)



At Nimbin Show

Blue Knob, 10 minutes north of Nimbin.

## Programme

- 8th October: Len Martin will do the honors and open with 'My Father's Story'. Len is a renowned poet and award winner at the Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup.
- 15th October: Fraser Ashford is a musician and performer, and new to the Nimbin region.
- 22th October: Vince Stead has a strong



Trash & Treasure Market Photos: Marie Cameron

local following and won the Peoples Choice Award at the 2016 Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup.

- 29th October: Teresa Biscoe is a well-known local poet and identity. Her Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup appearances are the stuff of legends.
- 5th November: Ruthie Shinn – a gentle poet with a Nimbin Performance Poetry 2011 Peoples Choice award to her credit. Each 'Tell me a Story' will commence at

10am and unfold for up to 30 minutes. The room will be arranged for an intimate setting, allowing the audience to sit at tables and chairs and enjoy some morning tea while listening to a story. Everyone is asked to arrive in advance and be seated by 10am. When the story is told, people can ask questions and interact with the teller.

For information, phone Marie Cameron 0448-685-925, email: [marketblueknob@gmail.com](mailto:marketblueknob@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook.

## Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

Our most recent Garden Club visit was to the home of Steve and Mandie Hale at Tuntable Creek. The property has been established over the past 30 years. It is three acres that was just lantana and weeds, and has been transformed into the most magnificent low maintenance haven.

Blue quondongs tower over the property, providing a canopy that shades the wonderful array of tropical plants and bromeliads, and shelter them from frosts. Hundreds of palms line the banks of the creek, creating a wonderful tropical micro-climate, and can be enjoyed from the cantilevered deck that hangs over the floor below.

The native bee hives pollinate the many different fruit trees and seem to be doing a great job looking at the abundant harvest of citrus, tropical and native crops.

The enormous veggie gardens are fully enclosed, protecting them from birds, wallabies, insects, and anything else trying to get in... the Fort Knox of veggie patches.

The replica Stonehenge had people smiling and giggling at the thought of dancing naked around a fire at midnight on the eve of the Solstice.

The afternoon was completed by a smorgasbord of cakes and slices, with a cuppa and a good chat (as always).

It was a truly great afternoon, and a big thank you goes out to Steve and Mandie for all their hard work.

The next Garden club visit is to the home of Valerie Cameron at 865 Mountain Top Road, Nimbin on Saturday 22nd



October from 2 – 4pm. One of the original homesteads in the area, it is a most magnificent property, and a great way to spend an afternoon. Guests are always welcome to join us. We bring a small plate of afternoon tea to share, and a cup for a coffee or tea.

## Songs from the gimbal

### The Imbibers Ark

by Thom Culpeper

Perched at the 'gimballed' stove in a hurling sea, what could be had to warm the fundamentals, the cockles of the soaked heart and soul?

The dream of a rare seared sirloin or lamb always seems just as far away as a safe anchorage, just as love will not always hove to our individual wants.

A hearty nosh. Escapes. And the standby: a serve of the various canned or packed French onion soup threatens the gut over Pyrex and must suffice! You could and can 'fish'... fillets in butter, light, over a green salad, pure Mediterranean.

Baccala nearly delves into this grace. Sun-dried cod, as old as Portugal and the Dogger Banks that lead to the Americas. "For the Cod"... as was the edict of Henry the Navigator and consequently a little checked by the immovable rocks in another hemisphere, that of Western-lifestyle Oz.

The other half of the world that was the "Property of a Portugal" as a Pope or three having had said, bribed by commerce in search of all that could make this rough fare 'digestible' and turn a profit, while taking its toll of the navies for quest on the spice-run to Batavia, to make the broken-mouthed tough mountain-bush-fed mutton and the hard tack of sun-dried cod 'managable'.

Then as now, the purpose of the present media's eat-



### Baccala Pomodoro (Lisbon)

#### Ingredients

- 1 kilo Baccala (salted dried cod)
- 3 tins diced tomatoes or a kilo of skinned tomatoes
- 200 mls green olive oil
- 8 cloves purple garlic
- 25 grams oregano
- 20 grams thyme
- Pepper or chili to suit
- 70 grams capers
- 10 grams fennel seeds

#### Method

Soak the Baccala overnight, or in three changes of water. Simmer in fennel/oregano/thyme water. Make up the tomato base, and braise the cod sections in the sauce for 1-2 hours. Serve over polenta or pasta of choice.



cook-nosh nonsense of the 'Fud-racketeers' of the infotainment clowns of mass waste food-idioty. "Go back, Stay away." "Eat simple fare!"

Should the thought of baccala (salted dried cod) snatch your fancy, see above for how it goes.

Kimchi classes starting soon at Blue Knob!

# Diary of a vegan diabetic



*Walking into the Light* is not your usual story about living with diabetes. Lucas Verhelst takes a bold new approach to the issue, in every sense of the word.

Lucas said, "Just like seven million Australians, I live with a chronic disease. I have met children, parents, grandparents, all of whom have been affected by diabetes and are looking for a better way to overcome the disease."

Spanning 30 years of living with Type 1 diabetes, this is an epic tale of love and loss and the discoveries made along the way.

A total switch on normal diabetes management, this radical new approach has been supported by current scientific findings. Lucas is living proof that the

method works, and avoids the long-term effects of living with diabetes.

Part biography, part manual, part cookbook, this beautifully illustrated story gives us a unique insight into not only the physical issues of dealing with chronic disease, but also the emotional demands.

"...a beautiful story, with beautiful messages." – Zippora Karz, former soloist, NYC Ballet, author of *The Sugarless Plum* and *Ballerina Dreams*.

Lucas Verhelst is a member of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. Visit Lucas's website at: [VeganDiabetic.org](http://VeganDiabetic.org) for more information, and to download the book.

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## Recycled market cancelled in lead-up to Open Day

Lismore City Council has cancelled the October Lismore Recycled Markets in preparation for a special market in November to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> birthday of Northern Rivers Waste.

Northern Rivers Waste is the waste operations arm of Lismore City Council, which has seen extraordinary growth over the last decade and a half to become a leader in recycling innovation.

North Rivers Waste's birthday event coincides with National Recycling Week and Council is hosting a special open day with bus tours and competitions, a big recycled market, interactive children's activities and much more.

To ensure lots of stallholders can be secured for the event, Council has decided to cancel the Lismore Recycled Markets on the third Saturday in October.

"We would like to have a really special day with lots for families to enjoy so we decided to have a break from the market in the lead-up to the open day," Waste Operations Coordinator Kevin Trustum said.

"It's a very special occasion for us – it is hard to believe just how much we have changed in 15 years."

Kevin explained that Lismore was once just like any other tip: there was a large hole in the ground and people would pull up and throw their rubbish in the heap. "These days our landfill is lined with a geosynthetic clay liner to stop any leaching of toxins, and all old landfill is capped with native vegetation –



a practice Lismore City Council pioneered in NSW," Kevin said. "We have an award-winning Materials Recovery Facility, are one of the few councils that can recycle soft plastics and we crush old glass for use in local roads. These days, 80% of all

our operations are powered by solar from our own rooftop solar arrays. The advances in technology and in how we think about our recycling is phenomenal.

Lismore is particularly progressive in wanting to deal with what we consume in our own backyard and we have absolutely set a benchmark for other councils to follow."

The Northern Rivers Waste 15<sup>th</sup> birthday Open Day is on Saturday, 19th November from 9am to 2pm at 313 Wyrallah Road, East Lismore. All activities are free and everyone is welcome.

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## Homeopathic remedies for every purpose

by Robin Stein

It was wonderful to get such an incredible response to my September article. It's great to discover that there are so many who would prefer to live without toxic chemicals in their lives, and I'd like to thank every one of you for your emails.

So many of you have asked me for lists of the pest and weed eradication remedies, bite and sting antidotes and all the other wonderful remedies I feel so passionate about.

However, I carry more than 1000 remedies with me to treat anything or anybody,

so please contact me at: [robinstein@gmail.com](mailto:robinstein@gmail.com) and I can send you a list.

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# Know your weed – Blue mist

**Weed Words**  
with Triny Roe

Not all weeds are the same. People often talk about the usefulness of weeds, how great they are – their medicinal value or that they are edible but these refer to specific plants. Weeds have to be considered as individuals. They are not one amorphous group of plants.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the Know Your Weed competition organised by the Nimbin Environment Centre. There was a great response and amazing knowledge out there. The winners were drawn at the Nimbin Show. Many thanks to the sponsors who generously donated prizes: Happy High Herb Shop, Hemp Embassy and Armonica Café.

The key to successful land management is to know your flora – weed, wonder herb, or native pioneer. If you discover a new species growing or want to introduce another one, ornamental or otherwise, ask questions and do your research. How will this plant behave? What's its history? Could it become a problem down the track?

Admired on a recent garden visit, a mystery plant was in resplendent bloom. No-one there knew its name. Growing happily for twenty years it had formed a large patch with multiple stems reaching 2 metres tall. This spectacular shrub had fluffy, lilac-blue flowers similar to those of a giant billy-goat weed. Its large, dark green, heart shaped leaves were scored with distinctive prominent veins.

Now identified as *Bartlettina sordida*, aka blue mist or purple torch, and previously known as *Eupatorium sordidum*, this spectacular specimen hails from the cloud forests of Mexico.

*Bartlettina sordida* scores a listing in the *Global Compendium of Weeds* and is recorded as 'environmental weed, naturalised, noxious weed, sleeper weed'.



The flossy flowers produce light seeds with a feathery pappus that can blow on the wind. Some reports by gardening enthusiasts indicate a low viability of seed though this could vary with location. It propagates vegetatively very well.

New Zealand has a big problem with it. Spread by seed it is found on disturbed bush margins forming thick clumps. It was introduced into the Cibodas Botanic Garden near Bogor, Indonesia. From there it dispersed into a nearby national park on Mount Gede-Pangrango and is now well established along the path leading to the Cibeureum waterfall. In Australia it is recorded as being naturalised on the Atherton Tableland in Northern Queensland. There are also records of infestations around Sydney, probably from bush dumping of garden refuse.

Blue mist has the potential to naturalise in the cooler mountainous rainforest regions of SE and Northern NSW. Preferring moist shady gullies it can, in time, form a large dense patch, displacing native vegetation. In hotter, drier regions it is less likely to be a

problem, though it can withstand dry periods once established. Frost is also a limiting factor.

Be careful if you acquire, or already have this plant. Sources suggest it does well in pots. Just because a plant isn't currently on the hit lists doesn't mean it couldn't become a problem in the future if not managed appropriately.

Control measures do not need to involve herbicides. Non-chemical vegetation management can include grazing by goats. Lantana, crofton weed and running bamboo can all be effectively controlled by these ruminants who prefer a diet of fibrous woody plants.

Many weed outbreaks result from dumping garden waste in bushland or down the gully. Plenty of alternative disposal methods are available. Make a compost heap, put material through a chipper or make weed tea. Return the nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Many weeds make excellent mulch. Make sure they don't contain viable seed or vegetative matter that can root or shoot.

Happy weeding.

## Leaving technology dependence

by Geoff Dawe

Robert Wright in his book *Nonzero* concerning evolution and human cooperation, describes moral indignation as "anti-cheating technology." It appears that as humans began looking sideways at technologies, technology apologists pointed out that not only are technologies everything that is positive, but they even exist in moralities!

In discussion of suggested movement by humans away from technologies, what is meant by technology requires definition.

Technology can be defined as the processing and use of inorganic substances to manipulate inorganic and organic substances to premeditatedly gain a particular advantage of nature. The method of processing causes nature to coalesce by a means not usual, and in the long-term detrimental to it, in order to supply a particular comfort to an animal species. Fire, for example, is not a technology if produced by say a lightning strike or from the accidental magnification of broken glass. However, fire-stick farming, or a crow collecting a stone and placing it on a cow turd to later turn the stone over and harvest the earth worms underneath, is technology use.

Technology is not a danger to planetary well-being in itself. It is a danger in excess, and as humans are

now noticing, Western civilization is getting signals from nature that humans are living well beyond what is necessary to prolong Earthly life.

Since humans have arrived at the edge of a dead planet through their own efforts, it is empirically proved that technologies in total produce more long-term harmful effects than there are short-term benefits. Technologies are therefore intrinsically anti-life. With minimal use they create little long-term harm thanks to the intrinsic healing ability and pro-life tendency of nature.

Movement away from technology dependence is post-industrialisation. The primary economic needs of humanity are food, clothing and shelter. With post-industrialisation these need to be equitably available to all people, but their quality will vary from what people are used to in the industrialised world. Shelter for example may just become shelter: a sleeping area out of the rain. It is unlikely to be the mansions Westerners all live in now. Clothing may be more utilitarian or functional and designed for warmth rather than for reasons associated with fashion or embarrassment.

Food is the major economic requirement of humanity. It needs to reverse the effects upon it caused by civilization, and increase in quality and distribute equitably. A means of doing this is for humans

to function primarily en masse as gardeners, possibly of food forests, rather than as a small class of people called farmers. Associated with this gardening movement is an enquiry into what human food actually is. It is now scientifically known that humans are not dependent on eating animal products. There is even doubt that humans need to throw their food on the fire.

It goes without saying that electricity and car use, the two major causes of excess carbon dioxide emissions are luxuries that have distorted Western culture's perception of poverty. For decades it has been thought that if one lives without electricity one is in poverty. If poverty is actually re-defined, in light of an environment crisis, as dependence on technologies that degrade the Earth, immediately the whole of the West becomes impoverished.

Leadership of each human involves taking full responsibility for the technologies they are dependent on for the fulfilment of human lives, and working out ways to organise to drop off as many of them as possible. This is based in the understanding that as one becomes independent of them one reverses the anti-life direction of the exploitation or take-all of civilizations, in favour of the pro-life direction of give and take found in reciprocation.

# Plant of the month

**False Sarsaparilla** *Hardenbergia violacea*



False Sarsaparilla is a most beautiful scrambler or twiner. Its rich purple pea-flowers truly announce the arrival of spring.

Common in the dryer forests in the area, *Hardenbergia* can often be seen sprawling over bare earth on roadsides, particularly after machinery or fire in that area.

In Nimbin, I often see individual

scramblers year after year growing over their friends the shrubs in their usual habitat of dry sclerophyll forest.

To grow your own, simply pick the dry peas in summer, empty out the seed and sow in a well-drained seed raising mix. There are also a number of hybrid varieties available at nurseries.

## NIMBIN ENVIRONMENT CENTRE NEWS

by Stewart James

The long awaited and much anticipated release of *The Bentley Effect*, the feature length documentary about our community's struggle against coal seam gas in the Northern Rivers, has finally been announced, with several screenings planned from late October.

I was struck by this quote from one of the commentators in the film, Polly Higgins, who is a barrister and campaigner for the law of ecocide: "...but when we view ourselves as protectors of the planet, we invite ourselves to dare to be great, and that's truly when the magic begins! That is what we are now doing – our time has truly come."

How inspiring and true. I take the health and sustainability of our environment very seriously – our environment has limits, and although something maybe legal and government approved, if it doesn't have a definite social licence from the community in which it intends to operate, then it operates on shaky ground. A social permission is paramount to any operation within our environment. Without an environment there's no economy.

Our Environment Centres and volunteers made a significant contribution during the Bentley campaign. NEC and CEC were involved in the strategic planning and day-to-day operations of Bentley, from paying the numerous daily bills and accounts; the generous donation of the communications van; the Silver Bullet, kitchen and wash up facilities, plus the chiefs, cooks and kitchen staff. Also the numerous flags, installations; tripods and viewing pole, including the iconic Bentley Angel.

And not least, all the wonderful NEC and CEC members and volunteers both on-site and back at the EC's, keeping the doors open. These people are of immense persistence, and have incredible patience and an absolute determination not to be blind and not to be silent.



Judging by the terrific trailer you can see on YouTube, *The Bentley Effect* promises to be a very important cultural, political and historical document, and I reckon it will provoke a very emotional response from local audiences, myself included.

Nimbin Environment Centre is enormously proud to be hosting one of the first screenings of the film at Nimbin Bush Theatre on Friday 4th November. This follows the world premiere at the Byron Bay Film Festival on 22nd October and official launch at Lismore Star Court on Saturday 29th October.

Although we haven't seen the finished film yet, it's a great credit to the filmmakers, led by Brendan Shoebridge, to have made it to this exciting stage, entirely with donated and community-raised funds.

Please note that the filmmakers are still trying to raise funds to cover the \$68k completion budget of the film, for sound mix, colour grade, music, online edit, graphics, animation, mastering, legals, marketing and distribution. These things are expensive but necessary, so if you could help with even a small donation, please consider contributing.

The Bentley Effect website: [www.thebentleyeffect.com](http://www.thebentleyeffect.com) directs donors to the Documentary Australia Foundation where all donations to the project are 100% tax deductible.

# Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

Just a few days ago I despatched Friends of the Koala's 2015-2016 reports to the regulator, the Office of Environment and Heritage's Wildlife Licensing Supervision Unit.

Although the reports are quite detailed I wonder whether the unit staff who deal with them have any understanding at all of the time, the emotion, the exertion - physical and intellectual, the joy, the despair, the financial cost and everything else that goes in to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

Our licensed area is quite large; about 10,500 sq. kilometres. It's based on the Office of Environment and Heritage Management Areas of Richmond River, Tweed-Kyogle and Byron Coast which in terms of local government areas equates to Tweed, Kyogle, Byron, Ballina, Lismore and Richmond Valley with a bit of Clarence and a bit of Tenterfield thrown in.

The bald statistics are these: during 2015-16 Friends of the Koala's volunteers "collected or rescued" 309 koalas. A further 101 call-outs were made to koalas that had either disappeared before the rescuer got to it or the rescuer was unable to capture the animal. Another 311 koalas were reported as sightings only, i.e. they were seen but did not require intervention.

Of the koalas brought in 93 were either dead on arrival or died in care; 159 koalas required euthanasia, 44 were successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild and 13 were still in care at the end of the reporting period.

Ten koalas were admitted due to injury; 60 had been struck by cars; 27 had been attacked by dogs; 141 were suffering from disease; ten were considered geriatric (hallelujah!); 16 were orphaned or abandoned littlies and of course

Sweetie, who's not releasable, remained in permanent care.

Readers with some experience of wildlife rehabilitation, human emergency service or even a keen imagination will get it – or a hint at least, but most people have little or any notion of the degree of involvement required by koala rehabbers. Indeed, there are many who think we are paid for the work we do; few give any thought to payment for the veterinary services required.

I have to smirk: I remember Peter Garrett when he was Minister for the Environment asking me exactly that question. Who pays? Well Minister, it's more a question of who doesn't pay. Government certainly doesn't pay. Koala hospitals and koala rehabilitation groups are kept afloat by the generosity of the koala-loving public. The wonderful local veterinarians who support koala rehab groups may receive token payments from the groups they service but I believe it's truer to say that they provide their expertise pro bono. Mr Garrett nodded sagely. Clearly, it was the first time the matter had received his consideration.

Several years ago, one of our home-carers wrote about a day in her life. It went something like this:

**3am** – phone call from the Care Centre Coordinator while she settled an adult boy hit by a car.

**6.30am** – coffee, feed the koalas (and the kids if they've not already fed themselves).

**8am** – kids gone to school, race into the Care Centre to do an autopsy on the car-hit that did not make it through the night.

**9.30am** – catch up on emails, phone vet about



**With the help of the amazing staff at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, Antonio has survived a suspected car hit. He's back at the Koala Care Centre and we expect to release him soon. Is it really good enough that the hospital treatment and rehabilitation of the nation's wild koalas are so dependent on charity?**

pursuing some blood work on one of my koalas in homecare – a good outcome

**10.30am** – off to the Biggest Morning Tea at school to raise money for cancer.

**12 noon** – take koala to vet, pick up paperwork from the Care Centre and check all is okay.

**Lunch.**

**2pm** – kids to the doctors; oldest is having a blood test for the first time but she's okay with that because she's seen it happen with the koalas and knows what it's all about – mention she will have to go on Incremin just like the koalas if her iron levels are not okay.

**Afternoon** – back to the Care Centre for a joey that has just come in, do a quick assessment – extremely sick, extremely thin, smells, cold. Let him warm up on the way home, finally get home – the joey is very ill – sub-cut fluids into him; now he is warm; administer antibiotics after speaking to AWH. Leave him be; packed away warm and comfortable in his basket.

**Sometime later** – hubby's arrived home with leaf he's harvested on the way. Change the leaf in the koalas' run. Check on the little one again – he has died – bugger!!!! Ring AWH to let them know as we had organized him to get up there the following morning. Feel consoled when G tells me what her day has been like. Ring around the people who were involved with the little koala's rescue to let them know the outcome.

**Dinner.**

**Evening** – Autopsy the little dead koala.

Think he may have starved to death – there was nothing in his belly or intestines, plus he was septic. Poor thing. Not a great start for one so small (166g). Note to myself to check some questions I have with AWH about what I saw.

**Late Night** – Awake in bed I remember that I was supposed to pick up a rescue cage from the vets and didn't – oooops – leave a message on the Care Centre 101 to see if someone rostered in the morning can pick it up.

Little wonder that koala and other wildlife rehabilitators suffer burn-out! Little wonder that they are so few. I take my hat off to every one of them.

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 and how you can assist koala conservation, visit: [www.friendsofthekoala.org](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org) or email: [info@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org) or phone 6622-1233. You can also follow us on FaceBook.

# To re-design our world, we must re-imagine ourselves

I'm washing the dishes. We've eaten: food pulled mostly from the garden; cabbage salad and dill sauce and roasted carrots.

Now I clean from those dishes the remnants of our peaceful and privileged gastronomy, using eco-detergent that smells of lemon myrtle, and I stack the plates on my bamboo rack to drip dry.

The radio is on, a litany of inane doublespeak and dumb distraction, the latest list of bad news. In the face of the latest scientific consensus, that we are locked into a trajectory of at least 2 degrees of global temperature increase – and its unstoppable knock-on effects – my dish washing seems a sad and pathetic thing.

Whatever became of me? I wanted to change the world. Don't we all? What became of all of us? How is it, in the words of Jonathan Byrd, that we have all worked in concert towards something none of us ever wanted?

I've washed a lot of dishes dreaming of a better world.

There's no magic bullet. We can't buy, sell or outsource our way to ecological sustainability. We have designed societies that are destructive to the biosphere, and become habituated to them. To save ourselves we must rapidly and radically re-design our world. But in order to re-design our world, we must first re-imagine ourselves.

So this is my re-imagining: I



**Permaculture Principles**  
by Anastasia Guise

get out from behind the kitchen sink. And I walk. Just my own feet carrying me, a backpack with everything I need; I'm my own little version of Forrest Gump. I'm searching for some sky to look at, saltwater, a place to lie down with the thick black star-pierced sky making the world's oldest movie above my head. It's here I can remake myself, let the wind blow off all the little domestic grooves I've gotten myself into, and make my dreams alive again. To dry out my despair, to lengthen the chain.

As I'm walking, I let there be more earth than me. There's no radio talk, no-one to fight against, not even a moral high ground to perch on. It's just me, and the rainbow bee-eaters, digging tunnels in the sand-dunes,

*"What modesty clipped our wings,  
and traded our dreams for things,  
Lead from a leaf-covered trail,  
to a road with no poetry in it?  
Can we find our way back  
somehow?  
Or has our imagination failed us  
now?"*

– Scott Cook, 'Among the Trees'

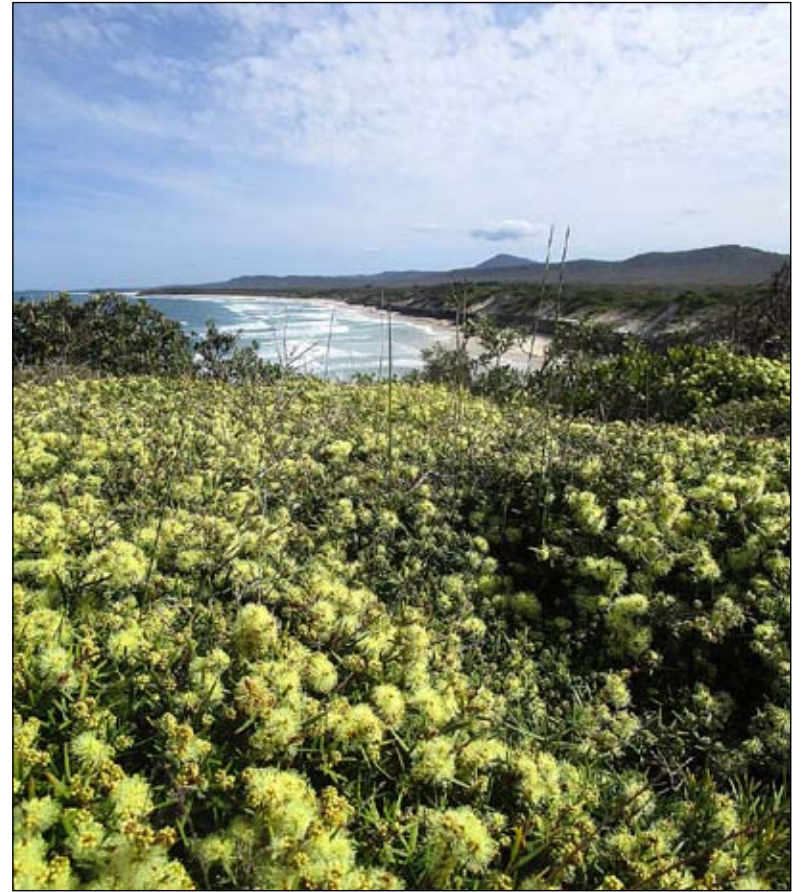
and white breasted sea eagles, and their cousins, the brahminy kites, sitting on little upwellings of air at cliff's end, staring into the sea. I sit out there too, until all of us, them and me, feel like kin. I pass stands of *Melaleuca nodosa* in bloom, and an echidna shuffling along the path.

When I push out onto a little spur behind the coastal scrub, into the flapping breeze, there are humpback whales breaching, slapping fins and tails. Dolphins follow me, surfing curling waves, past seaweed-covered shelves of sooty oystercatchers, pied sandpipers, and silver gulls. A pair of beach stone curlews – one of only seven breeding pairs on Australia's east coast – run ahead of me up the estuary, piping in alarm, and I crouch to savour them.

The crisp, welcome warmth of early spring turns into cool night. The campfire crackles, and the sound of waves pounds in the sea caves.

In the morning, my soul is a little larger, and there is no chain.

It's time to break free. Sometimes



it takes a visionary to cut through what is accepted as right and normal, and propose a concept which will shake us out of accepted normality.

The Permaculture concept was one such re-imagining, and Bill Mollison one such visionary. Bill's

time here is over, but his legacy lives on, in the hundreds of permaculture projects and organisations worldwide. We have all the tools and the power to re-design and re-imagine our world. But first we must re-imagine ourselves, and to hell with the dirty dishes...

## Addiction doesn't work – from substance dependence to self-reliance

by David Ward, Vital Choices

It seems fairly obvious to say that the attraction to substance use was all in the name of making things more manageable, to colour things a little. In reality there was no escaping the pain, only a prolonging of it through avoiding acceptance. No matter how hard I indulged, it wasn't going to make anything go away.

Depression and suicidal thinking actually intensified under the cloud of my addictions. During the initial stage of the transition from substance dependence to self-reliance, things seemed to intensify even further.



After a time, there appeared a clear light ahead, the negative thoughts gradually faded. I was now free to accept all my issues, no matter how painful. I feel addiction deprived me of the ability to accept the circumstances of my life, rendering me incapable of being present. It seems suicidal thinking and depression were

consequences or symptoms of this state.

So for me, freedom from addiction also means freedom from these helpless states. Underlying the issue of suicide is the notion of resilience: the danger increases as resilience is depleted. Addiction, and more broadly, compromised health, threaten that resilience.

It may be helpful to see suicidal thinking and depression not just as a mystery but rather as a clear sign of the importance of attending to wellbeing through a balanced state of health. If suicide is a problem, if domestic violence and youth homelessness is a problem, along with many other social issues, it may be wise to question the place of excessive alcohol consumption and other health compromising practices, by all of us, not just those with a "problem".

Looking at these issues in such practical terms could go a long way towards removing the stigma and the mystery, bringing a certain logic to the picture. There should be no more need for secrets, leaving us free to come forward and talk, to seek support and understanding.

I've always been comfortable to talk about these things in my life, but still I find it enormously liberating to finally accept that I'm not the only one to have experienced them. Ten years on it seems that these desperately negative mind states have completely dried up and vanished.

Patience, faith, support and continued practice, as opposed to endless talk and potentially addictive prescribed medication, have paid off. The effects of a younger generation witnessing this vivid transformation in their elders will contribute greatly to a more hopeful future.

David Ward, *Freedom from Addiction and Yoga Coach*, 0447-820-510 or go to: [www.vitalchoices.com.au](http://www.vitalchoices.com.au)

## Meaningful connections and the power of listening – part I

Meaningful connections make life worthwhile. We thrive when we feel connected and suffer if we don't. For those of us who have not had safe attachments (family, kin) while growing up, it can be an ongoing struggle to create and maintain meaningful relationships.

My understanding of a meaningful connection is a contact that allows matters of the soul to surface, spread and thrive. The inner most qualities of each one of us are longing to be nurtured. We may have meaningful connections with animals, plants, land or stillness, but it's the human connection that nourishes the soul like no other.

I have recently been reminded that listening is a

key feature within any soulful connection. Real listening is the most empowering activity within a relationship. And relationships are vital.

For each one of us there will be a point when we will understand that possessions don't have a lot of meaning at all in the big picture. The same is true for intellectual knowledge and our individual beliefs of what is right or wrong.

Our world is in crisis, with nature about to lose its balancing power as we exploit and exploit – all for the sake of material wealth that will fail to give us any meaning. Voices from all over the planet ask us to listen. We're asked to divert our attention away from the lures of capitalism and ego towards the real stuff, that which can

provide meaning – as well as inner (and outer) peace.

One of the voices is coming from the original people of this country. They are telling us about their practice of deep listening (Dadirri). They also seem to know a lot about meaningful connections.

The concept of the nuclear family is failing more and more. We're in need of connection within our species but concentrate more and more on things like status, fashion, shopping, gadgets, virtual realities, intellectual concepts or using recreational drugs. All of these are more or less short-term pleasures and cannot replace a soulful connection. What truly matters in the end are helpful actions, meaningful relations and opportunities to express love, gratitude and forgiveness.



by Betti Wille

Nimbin is a good place to live for people who seek alternatives to the mainstream madness. It might not always look like it from the outside, but there's more sanity in this community than in most other places. We could create plenty of meaningful connections by listening more deeply. We all have our own stories, some of which need

to be told again and again. However, most people talk and talk and talk – as if salvation could be found in exposing our ideas and values to other talkers.

And yet simply listening can create immense change. Listening to each other as well as listening to nature and the inner response of the soul that is longing to be heard. Everyone wants to be listened to. So, why don't we concentrate on listening for a while? Listening is our access to understanding. Most importantly, listening to a fellow human being creates connection and is therefore serving everyone.

Take the first person you come across after reading this; try to listen without making a single assumption or thinking about what your

reply could be. Just listen with your whole being, taking in all the information you receive. What is the message you are receiving?

You might find that you can do this well. Congratulations. Listening is a demanding skill in these times, but we don't have to be meditators, counsellors or therapists to practise it.

Next month's article will look at how we communicate, as well as more ways to become a better listener.

*"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."* – Stephen R. Covey

Betti Wille has a history in midwifery and holds a diploma in Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy. Email her at: [biodynamic.touch@gmail.com](mailto:biodynamic.touch@gmail.com)

# How to stop a horse in a bitless bridle

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

This has to be the number one question that people ask me, and it's a good one. Horses are famous for being able to run fast, very fast, and when we sit on them we want to know we can stop them. Many people who ride horses are afraid and the number one fear they have is that their horse will take off and they won't be able to stop them. In response to this fear an industry based on control through pain has arisen. The number of torture devices on the market is incredible. In peoples' minds they feel that they must use these devices to be safe and be able to stop their horse. Many times I've heard people say that bitless bridles may be ok for other peoples' very quiet horses but their horse is much too strong/powerful/wild/difficult to control etc. So let's take a look at what actually happens for the horse.

When pain is created for the horse via bits, whips, spurs or other painful training aids, otherwise known as negative reinforcement tools, the stress hormone cortisol is released. Cortisol triggers the flight response necessary for the horse to prepare its body to run from predators. It also hinders learning and memory recall. So what this means is that the very tools that are used to actually 'control' the savage beast are in fact the things causing it to be a savage beast in the first place. They stimulate the horse into flight mode and ensure the mind is not calm and capable of



Suzy and Rumpy

learning. This creates a flighty 'stupid' horse which is then a justification for using these pain creating tools, and so it goes, around and around in a circle.

Now let's see what happens when positive reinforcement techniques such as praise and food rewards are used in training. In the brain, dopamine functions as a neurotransmitter. The brain has several dopamine pathways, one of which plays a major role in reward-motivated behaviour. Most types of reward increase the level of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine plays a major role in the ability to learn and creates a calm and relaxed mind. This results in a horse who is not wanting to run away anywhere, in fact they're super keen to be with you. They're not in a state of stress, so your training sinks in and they learn

the necessary skills of life easily and quickly. Self-confidence grows and they can step into new places and situations without it triggering a flight response. They have confidence and trust in their human as there is no pain and stress within the relationship. They understand what is happening which removes the fear and confusion.

And now you don't need a bit, or spurs, or whips, in fact you never did. Your horse likes being with you and doing things together. Without a constant background level of stress and cortisol they are easy to stop. They can now be trained to stop off the seat, the voice or a soft rein contact, your choice. Stopping issues become a thing of the past and you wonder how you ever thought it was safe to ride with a bit in a horses' mouth.

That is the point I am at now. I could not sit on a horse with a bit in its mouth and apply pressure to it. To me that is the craziest most dangerous thing you could do. Why would anyone want to sit on a 500kg flight animal and cause it stress and pain while you're up there? There is nothing safe in that and it is definitely not humane. I hope this answers the question for everyone who's ever asked it. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information on riding bitless.

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# Beware of paralysis ticks (*Ixodes holocyclus*)

by Les Rees,  
Equine naturopath

The tick season is well and truly upon us, and I've been finding them attached on several horses recently. Given that ticks can cause some horrifying reactions in some equines, it's advisable to be armed with valuable information that may help with any important decisions concerning their welfare. Those decisions may save a life!

The saliva of a paralysis tick contains a particularly nasty toxin, which is both neurotoxic and cardiotoxic, meaning that it affects the nervous system and heart muscle and can paralyse and kill a horse. They can be found around bushy vegetation and paddocks that are used as wildlife corridors in areas where there's shelter from direct sunlight. When they need to feed, they climb the taller plants and structures and drop down onto passing animals.

They stay attached whilst engorging blood from their hosts from 1 – 7 days, during which the toxin spreads with clinical signs appearing around the third day, and toxicity peaking around the fifth day.

The symptoms of tick toxicity include lethargy, falling or lying down, off



feed, peripheral nerve dysfunction, lameness, wobbliness in the hind legs or all the legs, reduced muscle tone, difficulty eating, impaired respiratory function, heart and muscle dysfunction, debility and sweating.

If any of these symptoms are present you need to act immediately. If you find ticks, remove them and keep the horse in a cool stable away from direct sunlight, since the toxins are more readily spread around the body during movement and hot weather.

Veterinary intervention uses anti-tick venom which is very effective if caught in time, but as I've found, it isn't always easy to get one when needed. In this case I was able to make a tincture to address the symptoms and was lucky to have caught

it early enough to save our pony.

Unfortunately, other complications can develop without early intervention, so it's important to act quickly! A study on paralysis ticks in horses presented at an AVA conference stated that there was an alarmingly high mortality rate of 26% out of 103 horses analysed in the study, and 35% of the surviving horses went on to develop further problems.

It's important to do a daily search for ticks which are found mostly on the upper body, around the head including the lips, chin, around the eyes and ears, back of the head, neck, in between and around the front and back legs. Just feel around for a lump, and if it's a tick, remove it carefully so that the head is extracted along with the body. Some

people turn the tick around 180 degrees to ensure the entire tick is removed. There are several methods, but I've read that veterinary advice is not to use topical sprays because they tend to promote further production of toxins when the tick is dying!

Prevention strategies include: keeping horses away from bushy areas and overgrown hedges; ensuring the pasture is kept low; regular use of pyrethrum-based insect sprays; daily checks for ticks; herbal dietary supplements to aid the body's defence.

Not all horses will go on to develop these symptoms, as many develop an immunity having lived in tick-infested areas for some time, and those with less body density are probably more at risk. Ponies and foals and are in the risk category, but even a large horse can be affected by the paralysis tick, especially taking into consideration the movement of animals from tick-free areas, and animals with a compromised immune system.

Given that these symptoms are similar to those of the Hendra virus, it's advisable to be alert and act quickly to avoid a catastrophe.

Les Rees can be contacted on 0437-586-705, email: info@horsetailherbs.com.au Web: www.horsetailherbs.com.au

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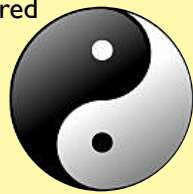
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## Beginners Yoga

Child pose opens the hip and back muscles, calms the frontal lobe of the brain and the nervous system generally.

by Therese Hedwards

Have you ever been curious about yoga and thought you might like to give it a try one day? Well, this might just be your chance. The Dharma Centre at Lillifield is introducing a class for beginners class and an easy flow class in October, so why not give it some thought? Maybe now is the right time to satisfy your curiosity.

The benefits of yoga are many. Here are just a few: stress relief, a stronger and more flexible body, you'll stay younger for longer, improves posture, builds bone density, promotes healthy backs and joints, drains the lymphatic system and improves immunity, improves lung capacity, balances the nervous system and strengthens the endocrine system.

It's relaxing and promotes feelings of wellbeing, improves focus, improves our balance, releases tension in the body and relieves aches and pains, improves digestion and aids insomnia. Yoga helps us to be happier and healthier humans, which is great for us and it also benefits those around us.

Beginning can be scary though. Sometimes just arriving at a yoga class

can be a feat in itself. I've heard many times that the hardest part of practice is rolling out your mat. As adults we sometimes build walls of protection around ourselves when it comes to learning new things. We can feel self-conscious or feel that we can't "do" yoga. We often hear that people feel they're not flexible enough to practise yoga. That might be true, for now, but if you come along to yoga, the practise will improve your flexibility. The more regular our practise is, the stronger, more flexible and more balanced we become in mind, body and spirit.

If you're worried that you'll look silly when you're doing yoga there's no need. We're usually so focused on following the instructions and focusing on the breath that we rarely have time to look around and see what other people are doing, so it's all good.

You're never too old or stiff to begin to practise yoga. Indeed yoga has a lot to offer the aging body. It teaches us skills to use in keeping our bodies well maintained and functioning efficiently. It's a practise that works well when performed on a consistent basis. In the words of a famous modern yogi, the late Pattabhi Jois, "practise and all is

coming".

A steady yoga practice can change your life for the better in many ways.

Every journey begins with the first step, so why not start with us? The Dharma Centre is a delightfully, cosy little yoga studio nestled in the hills of Lillifield, (the community next door to Barkers Vale Public School on the Kyogle Rd.) Birdsong and native wildlife abound. The studio is certainly a tranquil space and a beautiful place to practise yoga.

Contact Therese on 0439-575-714 if you'd like to chat about the beginner's class. You can start at any time throughout the term. The Dharma Centre also offers a range of other classes through out the week. Check out our Facebook page "Dharma Centre – Lillifield" for more details and directions. The beginner's class starts on Monday 10th October at 9.30am and the Easy Flow class on Wednesday 12th October at 9.30am.

Yoga classes are available at Dharma Centre Yoga Space, Lillifield Community, (15 minutes from Nimbin).  
Facebook: Dharma Centre Lillifield  
or phone 02 6689-7120.

## Nothing stays the same

I recently went West, back to my home town, to look at wildflowers and catch up with friends. It's a funny thing to try to do really, for going back can never be achieved. One might return to a place, but the place, like everything shaped by the flux and flow of time and change, is not the same place.

This was particularly poignant for me in two ways: some old friendships, it became clear, just don't work anymore, and the characteristics that I was once attracted to are now just irritating. Some old friendships, on the other hand, remain buoyant and are a sheer pleasure to share in. These ones have moved with the times, and we have grown to another level together.

The other way was discovered in walking around the streets of my childhood and youth. The last time I visited, this place was all spick and span with new buildings and pavements and an atmosphere of get-up-and-go. This time, I had a sense of a decaying ghetto. The block of units now occupying the land on which my father

designed and built our house now looked run down (and all in a remarkably short time). All the buildings in the street looked tired.

The buildings that used to be an eclectic mix of Federation, Californian, and modernist designs, held together by loquat trees and rambling vines, are now boring units interspersed with sad houses with weeds of wood sorrel and daisies, gone to wrack and ruin. It seems the dreams of developers have somehow missed the mark, or else the population is transient, and not the sturdy suburban stalwarts of old.

Heraclitus (535–475 BC) said, "You cannot step into the same bit of river twice." The water is different, the sand has changed and rocks worn down, the flush of new growth has grown old, and the old has grown new with interesting slimes and young fungi; there is nothing the same with this river that is life.

I inevitably wonder whenever I go back to the landscape of my youth, whether I should return



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell  
M.Couns. PhD

there to live. Every time, though, I cannot see why. I have made my home and my clinical practice in the Northern Rivers and I like it here. There are almost far too many memories back in the West for me to see the landscape afresh without its archaeological digs of personal history, and I rather like only visiting those memories when I wish.

Yes, I know, it seems I am contradicting myself here. I recognise that all is change, and that I cannot return to a time before the present, but that place is redolent with memories and it is my mind that tries to hold the place in place.

I'm not any different from anybody else here. We all do

it, but however much we try to keep our place safe from change, it doesn't work. The mutability of living is just like water: impossible to keep in an unchanged form, forever.

It interests me that a symptom of depression and obsessive compulsive disorder is the iteration, the doing or thinking of the same thing over and over in a stuck way. Seeking to find sanctuary in the repeated now doesn't work. There is no peace here; iteration is just irritation and a place of anxiety.

How nice it is to let go into flow, to not hold back nor try to hold still a pattern that, perhaps, used to be useful in times of stress. How good it feels not to have to regurgitate those old things that do not improve with time.

The substance of moving from this moment to the next to the next to the next is the substance of the blood, flesh, bone and breath of life. Nothing is the same. All is change and I rather like it.

Please email or phone Elizabeth McCardell for details:  
[dr\\_mccardell@yahoo.com](mailto:dr_mccardell@yahoo.com)  
Mobile: 0429-199-021.

# What about *after* birth?

by Kirrah Holborn  
Traditional wisdom

You've probably thought a bit about birth, but what about *after* the baby arrives? There's a lot of physical and emotional changes going on.

I'd like to invite you to have a think about the post-natal period before you are experiencing it. This can give you time to organise some helpful remedies or solutions and hopefully ease you into motherhood a little easier.

Some common postpartum challenges include; breast feeding issues, perineal discomfort, after pains and hormonal fluctuations.

## Milk supply

An excellent milk promoter is barley. You can boil it and eat it like rice or add it to soups. Here's a handy hint; make and freeze some soups while pregnant so you can easily prepare quick, healthy meals after your baby arrives.

Brewers yeast supplies a natural balance of protein, zinc and the B vitamin complex. It is especially useful as a quick pick-up when milk is scanty in the late afternoon. Try baking with it. There are many recipes online for cookies that can help boost milk quality and supply. The three main ingredients that are good to include are; oats, flax seed oil or meal and brewers yeast.

Nettle tea is rich in minerals and stimulates lactation and strengthens the adrenals. Nettle combined with fennel, caraway and aniseed can make a nourishing breast feeding tea.

## Perineal discomfort

I make a herbal bath mix called 'mama bliss'. It is soothing, healing and reduces pain and inflammation. It contains comfrey, lavender, calendula, sage, yarrow, rose petals and himalayan salt.

Calendula infused oil applied topically feels amazing and is very healing. Witch hazel on



pads is very soothing. Some mothers like to put them in the fridge to keep them cool which helps reduce swelling.

To help reduce any burning sensations when urinating, you can pour water over your yoni or try urinating in a small basin of water. Or better yet, make some mama bliss herbal tea and then cool and place in a peri-bottle (perineal irrigation bottle). This helps cleanse the area after going to the toilet and enhances healing.

## After pains

The uterus contracts around one cm per day to shrink back to it's pre-pregnant size. This can cause discomfort for many women and can be worse for women after subsequent pregnancies. It can hurt more while breastfeeding because oxytocin is released which encourages the uterus to contract.

Natural remedies and therapies for after pains:

- Practicing deep breathing (you know, the kind that helped you through labour). Also using a heat pack helps a lot.
- Some useful homeopathics; arnica, belladonna, calc carb, caulophyllum, chamomilla, cimicifuga, pulsatilla, sabina, sepia or sulphur. See a homeopath to help work out the remedy that best suits you.
- Tissue salts like mag phos. can help alleviate the cramping feeling.
- Massage your belly with soothing oils like chamomile or lavender.
- Useful herbs include; blue and black cohosh, cramp bark, black haw, raspberry, motherwort and St. Johns wort. See a herbalist or naturopath to have a tea or tincture blended for you.

## Postpartum moods

Women (and partners) may experience a wide range of emotions during and following the birth of their baby. It is quite common for women to experience the 'baby blues' in the first few days after childbirth.

Signs of the baby blues include being teary, irritable, overly sensitive in interactions with others and moodiness. The baby blues usually clear up after a few days with no other treatment except support and understanding.

If you find the baby blues just aren't lifting, it may be a sign of something more serious, like depression or anxiety. It's not known exactly what causes post-natal depression but several factors are thought to contribute. Factors include; hormonal changes, lack of sleep, social isolation, history of depression, stressful life events, thyroid disorders and vitamin or mineral deficiencies (particularly iron deficiency).

There are some great resources if you think you may have depression. Please check out 'Beyond Blue' for support, phone 1300-22-4636 or visit: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Natural solutions that help prevent or alleviate depression are: healthy diet, gentle walks, getting help with housework and meals, being social, reading a book, meditation, talking to others, supplements and placenta encapsulation.

I've written *The Happy Mama Guide* which contains over 30 natural remedies to help you thrive in those early weeks with your new baby. To receive a free copy, visit: [www.placentawisdom.com.au/enquire](http://www.placentawisdom.com.au/enquire)

*Kirrah Holborn provides pregnancy, birth and postpartum support in the Northern Rivers. She facilitates Birthing From Within antenatal classes, gives pregnancy massages and provides placenta encapsulation services. For the chance to win a pregnancy massage, text your name and email to 0429-308-851 or visit: [www.traditionalwisdom.com.au](http://www.traditionalwisdom.com.au)*

# Natural law

by Helene Collard

It can be quite disconcerting to live in our mainstream world today. Conventional media is filled with reports of war, political corruption, stories that vilify another, inflammatory remarks towards a race or religion, public and domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, the mistreatment of animals, environmental pollution, and the depressing list goes on.

It is true that many do live in a world of personal struggle and depression. However it seems that the mainstream support on offer often falls short. A holistic approach is one that recognises all parts and then treats the whole. These parts broadly include a person's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual make-up.

Many conventional wellbeing services, although well-meaning, fail to deliver holistic services. One simple, major reason for this, is the education and knowledge systems brought in by staff – including at executive, managerial and ground level, are not holistic in nature.

Another profoundly important, but largely unacknowledged issue, is the level of what Bin Sallik calls 'cultural safety' amongst mainstream wellbeing staff. Often cultural safety is mistaken for something one can learn about another. However, the cultural safety Bin Sallik speaks of is primarily about knowing thyself, in order to deliver safe and respectful services. An approach commonly found in holistic knowledge systems.

Cultural safety is a process of identifying and acknowledging our own life story and experiences. From that place, we can identify our sensitivities, vulnerabilities and perhaps most importantly, our unique reality. When we open up and learn about ourselves in this way, only then can we take true responsibility for who we are and what we bring into our home, our relationships, our work and ultimately our society.

Furthermore, only from this place of honesty, self-awareness and clarity, can we make meaningful decisions about our own wellbeing, including addressing our addictions and dysfunctions that ultimately prevent us from connecting fully.

Therefore, it is highly questionable



*We are all self-governing.  
Let us call upon our ancestors and teachers – past and present,  
to guide us in the way of the Heart.  
You are all my relations.  
All is One*

that any organisation or institution who is not founded on holistic philosophy, and whose staff have not done the bulk of their training in holistic knowledge systems, could claim they are delivering holistic outcomes.

If you are receiving conventional healthcare that is 'falling short', don't despair, simply look to a holistic treatment to fill in the gaps.

## What's on at the Yemaya Centre

- Reiki Second Degree course – 13th October, 10-5pm.
- Evolve Events – 19th October at 6.30pm. Topic: 'Managing chronic pain with yoga and meditation' with guest speaker Siri Shakti.
- Reiki First Degree course – 22-23rd October, 10-5pm.

Visit: [www.yemayacentre.com.au](http://www.yemayacentre.com.au) for more information.

*Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing, is a Reiki teacher and the founder of the Yemaya Centre and Evolve Events in Lismore. Helene's approach to wellbeing is focused in personal growth. Helene offers regular courses and circles, and enjoys making a range of wellbeing topics accessible to the community through Evolve Events. Helene has been writing Natural Law and delivering wellbeing workshops since 2008. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: [www.yemayacentre.com.au](http://www.yemayacentre.com.au) or phone 0405-656-797*

# Treating allergies

by Brigid Beckett

Spring is a lovely time of year as warmth and yang energy return, but for some people seasonal allergies make it less fun. The Chinese term bi qin is used to describe this type of seasonal rhinitis.

As anyone with the symptoms knows, these allergies can be persistent and unpleasant, causing sneezing, blocked or runny nose, itchy or watery eyes. The symptoms can be seasonal, as in response to pollens in spring, or last all year in cases such as dust mite allergy.

In Chinese medicine, hay fever is an external wind invasion. To stop or expel a wind invasion, the body's wei qi, or protective qi, needs to be strong. If wei qi is inadequate, then inappropriate response to particles can result, causing inflammation and mucous.

There are a number of reasons for inadequate wei qi. The wei qi has its basis in the kidney yang and is distributed by

the lungs. Lung weakness will result in weak wei qi. Lung weakness also causes lung disease, propensity to colds and flu, tiredness and a weak voice.

Lung qi can be damaged by too much exercise, but is also weakened by too much sitting around. Emotionally, sadness and grief weaken the lungs. Wind and cold make symptoms worse in these individuals.

Kidney weakness can also result in wei qi weakness. It often develops with age, overwork or illness. If symptoms are present from childhood kidney weakness can be congenital. Or long-standing allergies from other patterns can turn into kidney deficiency. In this case there will have been many years of ongoing hay fever symptoms.

Either kidney yin or yang deficiency may predominate, with yang deficiency more likely, symptoms can include tiredness, tendency to cold, sore back, although sometimes hay fever is the only symptom.



The allergy will usually be worse in the morning and evening in this pattern.

Both lung and kidney deficiency can be successfully treated, although, because they are often long-standing, persistent treatment is needed. This includes treatments between episodes to boost immunity.

It is especially beneficial to start treatment before hay fever season. There are very effective herbal formulas to boost wei qi and prevent hay fever.

A common pattern in children is lung and spleen deficiency with phlegm.

The cause is often dietary, with too much dairy and sugar being culprits. Overuse of antibiotics can also contribute.

Adults can also have this pattern. Often there is some digestive weakness, tiredness and a feeling of heaviness. Nasal polyps are often caused by phlegm. This pattern is readily treatable as long as the diet is addressed.

Persistent hay fever conditions can

cause obstructions that develop into sinus infections and sinusitis. This results in pain and swelling in the sinuses. Western medicine is not usually successful in treating long-term sinusitis.

As well as an extension from the above patterns, sinusitis can also be caused by liver stagnation and heat. In this case, contributing are stress or emotional turmoil. The additional phlegm and heat-forming attributes of cigarettes will aggravate the condition.

Tight shoulders, irritability, sleeplessness often occur with liver qi stagnation, along with sinusitis pain, adding up to an extremely unpleasant condition. While underlying factors need to be addressed, this problem responds well to acupuncture.

The season of spring has a connection to the element of wind and the liver meridian, which are often part of the hay fever and sinusitis picture. As the seasons are changing with wind and changeable weather, the time is right to treat these problems.

*Brigid Beckett is a fully qualified acupuncturist, working at Lismore Community Acupuncture. She can be contacted on 0431-702-560*