

nimbin's 25th ANNUAL

2017

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MAY

# MardiGrass

## THE WASH-UP



## Hippies' tails up at prospect of legal weed at last

by Michael Balderstone, President HEMP

The 25th MardiGrass went well if you managed to avoid the police. At least fifty drivers were busted by the saliva squad which we all know, including them now, has nothing to do with impaired driving. Shame on them for this absolute bullying. And others were harassed for swearing. WTF? An extraordinary number of people told me how the police turned on them for the F word. Weird. Or desperate?

In the village the police mostly kept their distance which was appreciated and there were few arrests, but it was surreal in the evenings with their big black imposing "public order and riot squad" vans passing each other driving up and down Cullen street like we were in Baghdad or Kabul. They were virtually the only cars on the road. Did they really think the totally peaceful stoned crowd might riot? Do they still really believe all the lies about weed?

I doubt it, this is the muscle of the new huge corporate interests keen on controlling and making billions from legal weed. Instead of apologising for treating us like criminal morons for decades they're taking their embarrassment out on us even more. Blinded by the potential massive profits to be made, we're a new type of enemy for them now.

Otherwise most people I spoke with enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Alan Glover and S in his moon boot recovering from an Achilles injury were in top form and highly entertaining as was all the comedy throughout the weekend. Disco Sistas tent was packed every night for the Laugh Mob and I was reminded of how important humour is to get relief from the ridiculous oppression we cop for using this herb which was in the majority of our medicines early last century.

Other highlights included the massive 420 Saturday arvo, following the record

72-van Kombi Konvoy, the Silent Disco which welded into the real disco, Francis Moonshadow's wedding, and the Forums which proved very popular. Many thanks to the four Canadians who came all the way to talk with us about how their PM is going to "legalise bud next year to keep children out of the black market and the cash out of the criminal's hands".

However, they made it very clear we all have a long way to go as a similar struggle is on over there between a few big corporations who want all the pot profits and the massive cottage industry which employs literally thousands of people who have learnt the art of growing and making medicine over decades.

Many people told me they enjoyed how spread out MardiGrass has become, from the Skatepark to the Greenbank. The music was exceptional in half a dozen venues and the comedy or quiet chat around a fire was always an alternative. The Pot Poetry was the best ever, Stoned Chess and the secret Cannabis Cup as amazing as the weather was kind.

A huge thank you to the couple of hundred people who crawl out of the woodwork every year and play their part in making the weekend's impact on our tiny village as minimal as possible. It's extra ordinary how the place is back to normal so soon after the huge weekend and thanks again to our awesome community whose annual protest and gathering has such an important purpose.

Meanwhile the battle over who controls the future of Cannabis is in full swing in Canberra and the hypocrisy is sickening. The very people who have vilified and ridiculed us for years now want to control and make the profit from the medicine they have tried to stop us using for the last fifty years. They should be on their knees apologising but instead are building even more jails. WTF!

The word is out and the hippies have their tails up at last as they are proved correct.

## Anarchy, crime, and marijuana

The streets are vibin', packed by people from all over the world who have come to Nimbin to celebrate marijuana for medicinal and recreational uses in Australia.

Any race, class or gender that you can think are all here.

Everyone says hello to everyone, we are all members of the same Botany club. Street vendors line the streets kneeling on their mats selling homemade wares made from recycled materials. Buskers bang out their unboxed world-class talents.

Everyone's smiling, from old ladies to thugs, whilst kids run underfoot laughing.

The riot police stalk through the streets slowly in their big 4WD's

Colour is everywhere, the fluro orange of a tradesman who just knocked off work can be seen pleasantly smoking a joint whilst listening to a DJ spin disco beats.

Extra-terrestrial mushrooms, fat cap graffiti, kangaroo's riding rainbows, and paintings of blue people flashing their pineals into the mystery. Happy red eyes. The smell of food from all corners of the earth, float over the inflatable tincture bottle and combi-van-bong installation.

An old man in a g-string stands with another old man who's dressed for a game of lawn bowls, they take a photo with a woman wearing pyjamas who has a king parrot perched on her shoulder.

Two women curve past with their bare breasts painted in



marijuana leaves bobbing in the sunlight. "Hey fellow groovers and body movers," crackles a voice from an old loudspeaker across the street, "a seminar, about how to grow hemp in rich organic soil is about to commence. Hemp is a potential future cash crop in the post mining boom, so come on down and find out about this interesting topic!"

A fight almost breaks out between two drunk blokes, but everyone melts in and intervenes, dissolving the outbreak like a self-regulating organism.

The police standing on the street look bored shitless until an old woman walks over and asks them to unscrew the lid off of her water bottle – which they do so efficiently – before going back to being bored shitless.

A man rides past on his bicycle, holding a smart phone out filming the street, he yells, "Peace and love brothers and sisters!" His viking beard waves in the wind.

Original elders of Pangea sit on the grass painting dreamtime stories on canvas, one of 'em is talking to someone about our connection

to the power of the land. Police blockade the roads with revenue stations in and out of town.

Didgeridoo, saxophone, and keys jimmy jam under the dim-lit green-smoked lights of the Oasis café.

A drum circle opens the heart of Africa onto the street, where people are dancing, shaking their legs and arms to the rhythms.

Back behind the scene when you walk past the trees, you find a local rapper spittin' his tight rhymes on a small stage among palm trees and people wearing hoods and snap back caps embroidered with marijuana leaf.

Stomp Sessions set up their sound system and whallop out those Big-Chunky-Bass-lines of that doof-doof music!

The lovers of electronic adrenaline flock to the stage and cut some shapes on the dance floor.

Police walk around the backstreets booking people for possession.

Other than that, every interaction is self-governed. And it's all peaceful.

Respectfully. So much fun.

– Corey Fisher

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# NIMBIN MARDIGRASS 2017



Pot forums



Kombi konvoy



Hemp Olympix



People



Protest



Joynt rolling



Ganja faeries





## Police overkill in MardiGrass operations

by Sophia Hoeben,  
Nimbin Action Group

On the Saturday before MardiGrass, a local man named Peace Freeborn was arrested for the alleged possession of two marijuana cigarettes and then placed in a cell in the Nimbin Police Station for five hours.

Whilst Peace was hauled away by the cops, a bystander named Robyn having filmed his arrest on her phone, was also approached by a riot squad policeman. The officer accused her of swearing which she denied, saying that she didn't understand the problem. Fearing she would be arrested, she was taking the phone out of her pocket to film when he told her she was under arrest.

As she was roughly thrown into a paddy wagon, she began to cry, having never before been in the hands of the police, she had not realised they would be so violent to women her age. In the wagon at the station, she asked them why they had arrested her, but was not given an answer.

The cop removing her from the wagon yelled "Get out!" on opening the door then grabbed her by the wrist and pulled her onto the ground dragging her towards toward the door of the station. In the process, her skirt had come down to her knees exposing the fact she had no underwear on that day.

Feeling totally embarrassed, she began begging with the cops to allow her to pull up her skirt. They ignored her pleas and kept on dragging her to a cell. She noticed Peace in the cell next door as she was being



brutally manhandled and thrown in.

She was still crying as her skirt was now gone completely. The cop threw it to her later asking her sarcastically, "Would you like some privacy then?" as they all stood around laughing at her. She was later charged with the 19g of marijuana they found in a search of her belongings.

Peace Freeborn had not only witnessed but filmed the whole incident of the police manhandling a 53-year-old woman on his phone, but it was deleted by the police.

Robyn was taken to the Nimbin

Hospital later to be treated for the severe bruising on two parts of her body, and a sprained wrist.

No doubt there were other incidents with police over the weekend of the MardiGrass. I heard mention of an old man being harassed and a lone brave laneway boy being chased, but these are hearsay until NAG get an official report.

Preferably with photos and witnesses' accounts, for this is what is needed if we are to defend ourselves from an excessively brutal police force who bring riot squads into our village over and over again.

# Grey puddles

**Ironically yours**  
by Dionne May

What happens after the rains, after the rainbows? MardiGrass 2017 hovered, poised quietly amongst threatening showers, then faded away. The air was more solemn than ever as self-satisfied local police smiled smugly from their small packs.

Even it seems in Nimbin, at our largest protest for cannabis law reform, protesting was thin on the ground and complacent, complying sheep sat meekly about and hopefully pondered the lack of colour, the lack of a protesting spirit and most importantly the absence of cannabis fragrance in the air!

So the pastel coloured MardiGrass passed and rains have created dark puddles within our village that locals keep falling into... depression and social withdrawal.

I watched our elegant, immaculately attired Ciska fade into that void. I've been watching other women in our village struggle against 'community treatment orders' that are usually reserved for people whom they deem to be a menace to society, orders that have stripped them of their dignity, rights and individuality. Ciska was shackled to one of these court orders.

Our brilliant, defiant, creative Ciska was ordered to undergo a possible five year regime on a powerful new tranquilliser, to be administered in our local hospital by the mental health nurse. Failure to appear on the appointed day gives authorities the right to arrive at your home and take you to the clinic until they can ascertain whether you are a threat or not. This process may take up to three or four nights.

Ciska faded before our eyes. The magic, the wonderful costumes, the great dame that she was began ridding herself of possessions. Stopped wearing make-up. Stopped caring. The mental health nurse was invited to her home to take away her beads, help her to get rid of stuff. With her tiny home threatened



Vale Ciska Cassa  
29-1-1966 – 16-5-2017

by an imminent sale and no tangible follow up support for this powerful new medication with its dreadful alienating side effects, Ciska cleared her nest. Unable to face a future so grey, she packed her things and flew away...

Eighty per cent of all drug related deaths in Australia are now at the hands of pharmaceutical drugs. According to W.H.O. (World Health Organisation) depression is currently fourth amongst the top 10 leading causes of the global burden of disease. It is predicted to be ranked second by 2020. I smoked cannabis and painted with Ciska, she was never a threat to anyone. On synthetic psychiatric drugs she died.

Tears gather in the dark puddles at the Oasis, under the great tree where Ciska visited and sat amongst us. Quietly the community have gathered, and with great care, try to blow gently, our own wind of change. With many of our colourful family no longer feeling safe here, we are standing beside each other. Forces in this caldera of the mightiest volcano on the planet, are blowing ripples over these dark puddles that have pooled too long. Community energy moves and sways to hold a community space for all to share beneath this sacred tree.

Rest in peace dear Ciska. As the wind ripples in this great tree, I look upward and trust that the great ancestors have gathered you up in their warm embrace as your last feather falls and your beads tumble and twinkle in the sky and shimmer in your memory. I'll miss you.



### Heartfelt thanks

Thanks to all our valued contributors for making this four-page MardiGrass pull-out possible.

The photography is the work of: Brian Alexander, Roger Austin, Peter Chaplin, Rob Harle, Garry Mimlich, Saras Salvador, Greg Soward, Sue Stock and Melissa Williamson.

The MardiGrass Organising Body would also like to thank the Nimbin

community for dealing with the various inconveniences encountered this year during the three-day protest gathering.

They also extend thanks to the Festival Volunteers, Jungle Patrol, Musicians and Performing Artists who made the event happen..

Finally, thanks to all those brave souls who came to fill our streets and make a statement about the law, the way it is enforced, and the social damage it causes.

### To Ciska

Dear Sista,  
My fare-thee-well to you:

Sadness has to go somewhere,  
Sadness has to be shared,  
Sadness can help us to share  
The missing of you.

Your dark brown eyes,  
Your colourful clothing,  
The birds who sheltered  
On your shoulders with you  
In the good old days.

Now, fly high in peace,  
Sweet Sista.

– Annie Heitmann

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