

A TASTE OF ART
www.blueknobgallery.com

blueknob hall gallery

Open Thursday to Sunday 10am - 4pm
719 Blue Knob Road, Lillian Rock Ph: 6689 7449
GALLERY • CAFE

Nimbin Post

Open 7am – 5pm Monday – Friday

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We sell and exchange:

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Nimbin Community Centre, Room A2
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday 10am – 4pm

Roxy Gallery
143 Summerland Way Kyogle
Phone 6632-3518

Opening Hours
Tues – Fri: 10am to 4pm
Saturday: 9.30am to noon

- Promoting local and regional arts;
- Providing emerging artists with opportunities to display and market their artworks in a professional exhibition space;
- Fostering cultural experiences for community and visitors to the area.

Email: roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au Web: www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au

Beyond the Rainbow
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Blue Knob lights up again

Colour and Light

Colour and Light: It's a big subject but without light we wouldn't be here. It was after all, 'in the beginning'. This is the current exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery and the artists and artisans have tackled this subject which can be one of the most challenging aspects of making art.

Emotions are often described in terms of colour; such as seeing red, feeling blue, green with envy; we feel a lightness of being, someone or something brings light or darkness to our lives. There's no denying that colour and mood are inextricably linked.

Colour theory can be an eye-opener into the world of art; not unlike music, we are told. There is harmony and mood in colour as in music and a 'wrong' note can change the whole experience.

A corona of light around a man in Marie Cameron's photo 'Last Man Standing' portrays strength, resilience, alone-ness and the beauty of a simple human figure. It shows how easily we can express a powerful statement with a touch of light.

Alongside the colour, warmth and vibrancy of the artworks in this exhibition, the artists have covered all aspects; light has shone through and given us reflections, clouds, warmth and depth.

The exhibition continues until Saturday 1st April.

Stories Alive: Faces of Blue Knob by Marie Cameron

We will be hosting our first solo exhibition by local artist/photographer, Marie Cameron.

This will be held in conjunction with the regular member's exhibition 'Ancestry' with the Opening night being held on Friday 7th April. Look for more info in the April edition of the *GoodTimes*.



'Exotic Flowers' by Margaret Berry

Artists & Friends lunch

The next Artists & Friends lunch will be held on Thursday 30th March at 12.30pm. For more information and bookings, please contact the Gallery on 6689-7449 if you would like to attend.

Ceramic studio

The Ceramic Studio has been open for a whole year now, so we would like to celebrate this milestone on Saturday 1st April at 10am.

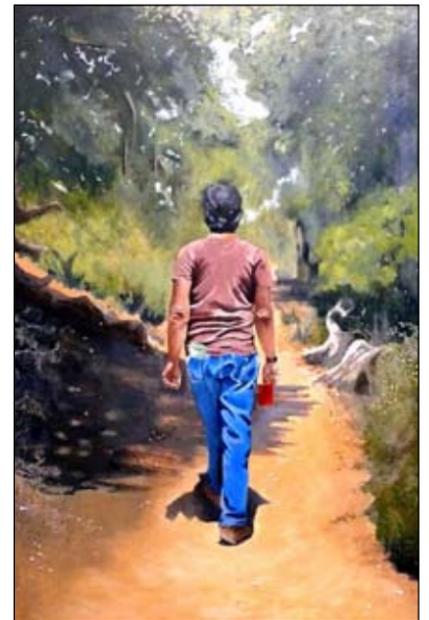
The Studio will have an Open Day for anyone who would like to come and check out the space, and see how it all works. There will also be cake, of course!

Blue Knob Cafe

The official opening of Blue Knob Cafe was held along with the Colour and Light exhibition.

The night was a great success with 60 bookings for dinner with Heather Kimber doing the honours with Rebekah and Simon and a gold ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Blue Knob Cafe would like to thank the support of the community for a great opening night.



'The Path to Enlightenment' by Anne Cook

Italian Cooking class

With Italian pasta chef – Fresh homemade pasta – Monday 20th March
Morning Session: Gnocchi and pasta al uovo.

9am: Introduction to history of fresh pasta with regional recipes, practical demonstration, preparation of dough
1pm: Share a lunch of your handmade gnocchi with fresh sauces and cold drinks

2pm-6pm: Afternoon session: Making Ravioli. Finish the day and take home pasta for your evening meal.

Cost is half day \$50, full day \$75, limited to 15 students. For bookings, phone or text Blue Knob Cafe: 0459-662-143 or: blueknobcafe@gmail.com

The Cafe and Gallery are open Thursday 10am-4pm, Friday 10am-2pm, Saturday 8.30am-2pm, and Sunday 10am-4pm. We're only a few minutes from Nimbin.



A taste of the new

Local Bundjalung artist Peter Robinson is back to exhibit his latest style of works at the Roxy Gallery.

Peter undertook his first solo exhibition at the Roxy Gallery some ten years ago and his creative style has moved forward, seeing him undertake a number of mural commissions in Bundaberg, along with participation in numerous exhibitions both group and solo.

As a local aboriginal man, Peter is extremely passionate about his aboriginal culture and through his beautiful use of colour and form, tells his stories of this land.

The Roxy Gallery director is extremely proud to have been an early mentor for Peter, encouraging him to get his art out into the main arena, which Peter has done, and this exhibition will be 'A Taste Of The New' as Peter will be exhibiting some of his latest digital images.

Peter Robinson's exhibition will begin on 8th March and run until 7th April.

Autumnal Tumble at Hanging Rock Hall



Gather with us for our next quarterly event, the Autumn Equinox on Sunday 19th March. Gathering from 3.30pm and Play at 6.23pm. Donation entry.

At this time the Earth is ripe and the harvest moon is soon upon us and we witness Nature's abundance and the wealth that is around us.

This is a celebration of plenty and we will share our wealth by giving all money donated to the Uki Refugee Project who are a collective that partners with people seeking asylum in Australia; and with the Australian community, to promote understanding, compassion and friendship for refugees.

Join with us as we once again connect with our roots and the hidden or forgotten past. This is a family event with performance and ceremony. The Play is a social reflection of the age we are in, the uncertainties we face, with a glimpse into the future and a hint of redemption and white magic.

These natural quarterly celebrations are dictated by the movement of the Earth and Sun and provide us with an opportunity to participate in simple ceremony as we acknowledge the Vernal Equinox with dance, song and performance.

Please bring a plate of finger food for sharing. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Artists Gallery is brimming with new works

by Peter Warne

This month, Nimbin Artists Gallery is buzzing with preparatory activity as we organise ourselves for the Autumn Arts Extravaganza, our annual big event.

We were expecting to have few, if any, new works to show for March, thinking that all the local artists would be busy preparing their entries for the Extravaganza, but to our surprise we have an unusually large offering of new works.

Which goes to show once again the level of commitment and industry of our local artists – they have managed to come up with a variety of fresh new works while still preparing their showings for the Extravaganza.

Several novel and arresting works come to mind immediately. Donna Sharam is presenting two large new canvases which surprise, surprise, even by her standards of originality and freshness.

The two works depict vividly imagined merry-go-round creatures: 'Horsing Around' shows a horse, prancing gaily forward, in a field decorated with multi-coloured spots, flowers and geometric figures, while in

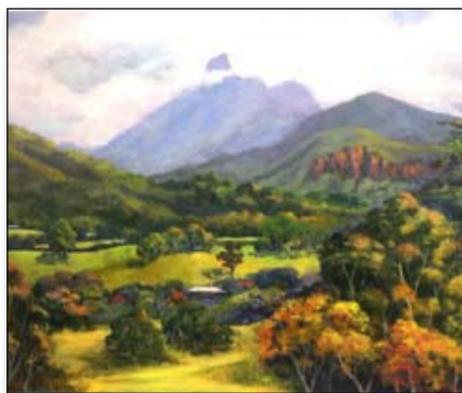
'Swimming Around' the equestrian motif goes submarine, offering an extravagant fantasy of a sea horse, bearing a red on white polka-dot saddle, with flying ribbons for a mane.

Maureen Whittaker's 'The Conversation' presents a rear view of two hatted women, sitting on a park bench overlooking what looks like an arm of Sydney Harbour, with the city in the background.

Something about the proximity of the two figures, combined with the tranquillity of the location, and the visible distance from the busy-ness of the big city, creates a mood of quiet intimacy where one feels the intensity of their communication, added to by the sense that in viewing the painting, one is a secret observer, almost prying on these two friends in their private moment.

In addition to these, there are two vibrant landscapes from Janet Hassall, a series of colourful images of the marine life in the Great Barrier Reef from Christine O'Brien, and a new landscape from Denis Meagher.

In all, there is an abundance of interesting new work to examine, well worth a diversion into the Nimbin Artists Gallery, beside the Nimbin Town Hall.



'Mt Warning Landscape' by Janet Hassall



'Border Ranges and Lorikeets' by Denis Meagher

This is the last call for submissions for the Autumn Arts Extravaganza.

We know that there are a lot of artists out there preparing works to submit, and this is the last reminder to get your proposal in on time: proposals must be received by Monday 13th March, and must give details of the number of works, size, a bio of the artist, desirably photos of the works, etc.

All works displayed must be new works, not previously displayed in the Northern Rivers, whether in Nimbin or elsewhere.

The complete requirements can be found on our website: nimbinartistsgallery.org as well as downloadable PDF documents of the consignment forms and tax declarations.

Alternatively, you can call in at the Gallery and collect hard copies of the paperwork, or email us at nimbinartistsgallery@gmail.com

And for all those art lovers who may not be artists, the Extravaganza will be open in the NimbinTown Hall from 1st April until 25th April, so make sure you arrange a time to visit.

Creative freedom: The art of felting



felting – using the finest merino wool.

At my workshops you will spend time with like-minded souls who also want to kick start their creativity. You will work with beautiful materials, feel productive, positive and focussed, then go home with some lovely, tactile, handmade items for yourself or to give as gifts.

I love sharing and passing on my skills, enabling others to use colour and fibre to express creativity, warmth and positive feelings. It's been proven that getting creative and using your hands reduces stress and enlivens the mind, so learning new craft skills is one of the best things you can do to balance out the downsides of hectic modern life.

- Child – parent teams are welcome.
- **Slipper Making Workshop:** Saturday 25th March at Coffee Camp Hall
 - **Flat & Nuno Felting Workshop:** Sunday 9th April at Federal Hall
 - **Bag Making Workshop:** Saturday 29th April at Federal Hall
 - **Slipper Making Workshop:** Saturday 17th June at Federal Hall
- Every workshop runs from 9am to 4pm. Cost is \$95 including morning tea and all materials

Suzanne McGauley works as an artist in the Northern Rivers area. Her main focus is on painting, felting, mosaic making, sculpturing and decorating ceramics.

Since 2008 Suzanne has been running art and craft workshops for children and also feltmaking workshops for adults.

For bookings and more information about the felting classes, phone Suzanne on 6624-3227 or email: suzannemcgauley@gmail.com
See: www.facebook.com/feltartnorthernrivers

'Felting' is the term most often used to define the transformation of a protein fibre into this warm and wonderful fabric.

In the strictest sense, felting describes the procedure of taking batts of wool fleece (raw wool that has not yet been spun into yarn), adding hot, soapy water and kneading the wool batt until the fibre scales interlock. The word "filz" is found in Old High German.

This language was in use prior to the 12th century, an indication that when felting today we are continuing to explore a very ancient craft. The microscopic scales that cover individual filaments of animal hair are responsible for the fibre's unique ability to mat or felt together.

Felting occurs when the fibre is moist and physically agitated and is enhanced by a change in the neutral pH to either acidic or alkaline conditions and the application of heat.

With warm water and soap, these scales swell open, causing the filaments to snag and interlock with one another when agitated. This knotting causes shrinkage, resulting in dense, strong felted fibre.

A felting workshop is an excellent adventure into felt making for beginners and more experienced felters covering both 'traditional' and more modern techniques including flat and nuno felting and three-dimensional



'Our Home Our Future' by Meg Nielson

CELEBRATING WOMAN IN ALL HER FORMS

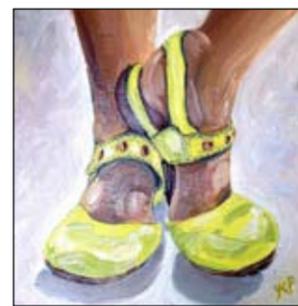
In conjunction with the inaugural Lismore Women's Festival, the Serpentine Community Gallery is hosting an exhibition celebrating 'Woman – in all her forms'.

With over 40 local artists exploring women's perspectives and expressions on the concept of 'woman', this is a must-see exhibition for everyone. Open to all local artists who identify as a woman, the exhibition runs from 3rd to 20th March.

The official opening with guest speakers and performers will take place on Friday 10th March, 6-9pm, and will be a treat for your ears as well as your eyes. Talented musicians will perform contemporary classical music written by women.

Our region has a rich but little-known and continuing heritage of women composers. The concert celebrates these women with a focus on living Australian women composers, including pieces by locals Lisa Cameron and Naima Fine.

Come along, stretch your mind, and surprise yourself



'Melon Shoes' oil on canvas by Yvonne Preston

with the diverse and vivid palette of sounds in new classical music by women. All welcome.

Bring a cushion to sit on, and feel free to contribute to the food table. Limited seating available.

Entry is free, although we will pass the hat around towards the musicians' expenses. 10% of profits from art sales will be donated to the Lismore Women and Children's Refuge.

Lismore Art Club Inc at the Serpentine

From 22nd March until 2nd April, the Serpentine Community Gallery will be

the venue for an exhibition showcasing some of the latest artworks by members of Lismore Art Club Inc.

The opening celebration will take place on Friday 24th March, 6pm for 6.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Established in 1960, Lismore Art Club Inc maintains a healthy and enthusiastic membership. A focus of the club is its monthly workshops, where invited artists share their skills or members get together to share their creative interests. Outdoor painting days are another popular feature of the calendar.

Held in high regard in the art community, Lismore Art Club's Annual Exhibition is held each August. For more info about Lismore Art Club: www.lismoreartclub.com.au

Serpentine Community Gallery is at 17 Bridge Street, North Lismore. Gallery hours: Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm, and Sat-Sun 10am-2pm. For more about the exhibitions or the gallery, phone (02) 6621-6845 or visit: www.serpentinearts.org

New stage inspires weavers

by Marie Cameron

Once upon a time, the Blue Knob Market had an old and run-down stage. It faced the wrong way and its use was limited.

Then along came Hellen Post with the *Stitch and Enrich* fibre artists, and the stage took on a new persona with spinning wheels and lots of laughter. Every Saturday morning, weavers, knitters and needle pointers arrived to enjoy some time together.

In a storm, the old stage blew away and within a very short space of time, the big overhanging fig tree rained so much litter onto its foundations, it all but disappeared.

As the month of February took hold, three local artists decided to construct a new stage.

Renowned fibre artists Lae Oldmeadow and Granny Breathweaver arrived with bamboo

and tools. Musician Gerard Lynam brought in more equipment and the trio worked hard to reshape the pathways and construct new retaining walls.

Then came the ladders and bamboo poles and a fresh structure emerged. Excited people arrived to witness the birth of something wonderful. On went the roof for sun and rain protection and finally, the palm fronds and banana leaves were woven into place.

Today the Blue Knob Market is proud of its new stage. It's one of those spaces: it lulls all who see it to sit a while and get busy with their hands. On Saturday mornings comfort cushions are scattered around, and the weavers are returning.

Thanks to Lae Oldmeadow, Granny Breathweaver and Gerard Lynam, the Blue Knob community has a new and highly useful muse to enjoy.

Lou Bradley plays Blue Knob Singer, songwriter and musician, Lou Bradley has a vision, and a powerful drive to match.

Since a teenager, Lou has loved to sing. Her passion for the Australian landscape and its inhabitants form the lyrics for her extensive original-song repertoire. With multiple albums and tours under her belt, Lou has established her alternate country reputation, and the music industry has taken notice.

In recent times, Lou and her partner Phil Chaffer moved from Mullumbimby to Barkers Vale, and the Nimbin region is realising the benefits.

In September 2016, Lou and Phil launched the first *Nimbin Roots Festival* and the *Australian Roots Music Awards* (ARMA). The festival paid homage to new and original music, and the



Lae Oldmeadow & Granny Breathweaver



Lou Bradley

awards were all about the music not status. For the musicians the weekend was a level playing field: no one musician was headlined, and all forty acts were paid equally. Nimbin-town became the stage, and 1200 revellers loved the music.

Preparation for the 2017 Nimbin Roots Festival is in full swing. After discussions with local elders, plans are in process to donate the 2017 profits to the Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Nimbin.

Lou and Phil are preparing to tour again, and they're heading to the Northern Territory. Before they leave they want to play in their local market, the Blue Knob Market. Catch them on Saturday 11th March starting at 9am.

The Blue Knob Market is held every Saturday morning 8.30am – midday. Find us on the new market app: www.mrktapp.com.au

For more information, phone 0448-685-925.

Chamber Chat

by Teresa Biscoe, President

We had a fantastic meeting with the newly elected LCC councillors. Eight out of 11 councillors attended as well as three executive members. The meeting was well attended by local community members who contributed some great local knowledge and asked some really thoughtful questions around the issues being discussed. We covered a lot of local community issues over the 2½ hours.

We asked Council what happened with the funds collected from footpath dining fees. Cr Vanessa Ekins advised that currently, approximately \$1500 per annum is generated and could be earmarked for a small locally-funded project if requested by the community.

There was great concern expressed by locals about the really poor condition of the Cullen Street footpaths. We would like to see an upgrade as well as short term works for urgent general repairs. Cr Elly Bird said that the footpaths are inspected annually and repaired on a needs basis and encouraged locals to report any issues as soon as possible to Council. General Manager Gary Murphy explained that upgrades can be very expensive and these works required a long term approach because of funding issues and could be incorporated into the upcoming LCC budget strategy plan if requested.

Recent development applications before council and the steady increase in tourism have highlighted the need to develop a long term parking strategy for our village. The village already experiences parking issues in busy times and the disabled and elderly are particularly impacted by current parking conditions with the locality of disabled parking and general access conditions to services also an issue. Adequate public pedestrian access from the off-street carparks to the main street was also highlighted. Development and Compliance Manager Peter Jeuken told us that after surveying parking conditions in the village in late 2016 they were developing a report to advise council in the development of a car parking strategy. The report will be available by May and after the Council has received it, community consultation will be undertaken to ensure local input into the strategy.

A related issue is the number of vehicles camping in the western carpark and around the village. This not only impacts on available parking, but can also cause health and hygiene issues with garbage and sewerage disposal. Recent signage has made some impact but policing strategies are difficult to enforce on any parking issues due to the lack of funding available for parking officers. We all agreed that we needed a whole community approach to tackle the issue.

The Cullen Street under-awning lighting project endorsed by the Nimbin Chamber last year was discussed with Council. The Chamber and the NCC sought financial support from council for the current funding application being made to the NSW Attorney-General's Department under the 'Safer City and Towns' program. The Council gave general support for the project and indicated that they would look favourably on an application to the LCC Community Grants Program to contribute to the costs and the 'Special Business Rate Variation Levy' could also be available on application by the Chamber.

Deep concerns around the proliferation of unsightly and potentially dangerous telecommunications towers around the village and outlying areas were expressed by some community members present, who felt that other technologies were as effective. The planned obsolescence of the copper connectivity,



being implemented by 2018, was also a concern for locals who experienced connectivity issues to the current mobile network due to topographic shadowing and atmospheric conditions and had understood that the copper network had initially been guaranteed as a back-up to the digital network. Mayor Isaac Smith said that LCC was over-ridden by Federal compliance laws for tower technologies. He recommended locals lobby Federal MP Kevin Hogan.

Natalie Meyer from the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre discussed the need for a public access shower for the town. She proposed converting one cubicle in the public toilet block to a shower. We discussed the public health need for a public access shower in the village. Council raised concern around the cost of managing and maintaining public facilities, but would look at the cost of maintaining a shower at that location which had an existing maintenance plan. Natalie offered to seek funding and costs for the installation of the shower.

Scott Sledge also raised the possibility of installing a new public amenities block at the pool and Peace Park area. Council advised that the average amenities block could cost in excess of \$250,000 to construct and also needed an ongoing funding plan for cleaning and maintenance. Stephanie Seckold expressed concern that only one public toilet block is not enough and another facility at the other end of the Shopping Precinct would be better for tourists and visitors as well as public drinking fountains. Garry Murphy from LCC indicated that drinking fountains could easily be funded and installed, whereas toilet blocks were much more complex projects.

The poor condition of the local signage at the entrances to the village was discussed. We discussed the need for durable community designed signs. The installation of tourist signs at well known scenic viewing areas was also discussed along with the need for bins to deal with rubbish being created by existing tourist activity at these sites. Council will look for funding but needs a design and plan from the community first. The village map sign that has been such a feature of Allsopp Park has been removed for repair and will be soon re-installed. Council will fund the installation.

The community expressed frustration at the lack of consideration given in recent development applications to Council for the existing Nimbin Development Control Plan and the need to update the DCP with further community consultation. Mayor Isaac Smith explained that LEPs which are driven by State planning legislation often override local DCP guidelines. Currently the NSW department of Planning & Environment is reviewing the application of LEP to local councils so he recommended making submissions to the website and to our Federal (Kevin Hogan) and State (Thomas George) members.

Lois Kelly presented and updated the current status of the the Nimbin Walking Trail Project to the Council. The importance of this project for tourist development was discussed and Lois will be applying for federal and state infrastructure funding if it becomes available. The Community commented on Kevin Hogan's recent parliamentary speech in

which he praised the Nimbin community and acknowledged Nimbin as a destination of choice for tourism in NSW. We asked the mayor to have LCC write to Kevin Hogan MP thanking him for his supportive speech about Nimbin and the initiatives taken here.

The need to develop better emergency plans for the village was discussed. Executive Director Infrastructure Services, also called Gary Murphy, said LCC could arrange for a community meeting with agency authorities (police, fire, rescue) to work on a plan.

Vegetation management for verges and in the village public areas was discussed. Many people felt that the rate of maintenance work was not enough. Concerns were also raised about the continued use of glyphosate to manage weeds. It was suggested that local landowners could receive a rebate for doing work but this raised too many public liability issues. Another suggestion was partnerships with local community groups to remove weeds and plant appropriate vegetation species. Gary Murphy said slashing along roadways occurred usually four times a year. LCC could arrange for the use of a tool trailer from Council to facilitate a community group who wanted to partner with Council who had limited staff and funds to apply for local planting and weeding projects. Council will also refrain from the use of glyphosate in areas specifically requested by the community (none currently in use at Peace Park).

I would like to thank all those Councillors and LCC staff who took time to come to our community and listen to our concerns and for their thoughtful, informed and frank answers to our community concerns. I would also like to thank all those community members who came to express their concerns and contribute to this very important discussion. I look forward to working with you all for the benefit of our community

Plant of the month

Pomegranate Tree *Punica granatum*

by Richard Burer,
Bush regeneration specialist

Truly March explodes in our place with shimmering translucent kernels of the Pomegranates.

This hardy ornamental tree has been one of my favourite trees on the farm and it's been really rewarding this year with an abundance of fruit.

Easy to grow, Pomegranate is the late summer/autumn crop. It follows this season of tropical fruits that make you realise how wonderful our subtropical environment is.

A tree featuring in biblical times, travellers on the great eastern roads brought this tree to Europe from Iran / Northern India, where it gained popularity through its use in herbal medicine and beverages. It's a very



powerful antioxidant, and its tart taste reminds one that it must be medicinal!

I love having fresh drinks juiced from the fruit in places like India, such a treat! I recommend planting one just about anywhere, so long as the soil drains and its in the sun.

Next month we will get back to our local native trees, so any ideas, let me know.

To contact Richard, email: richard.burer@gmail.com or phone 0402-746-146.



Nimbin Garden



Club notes

by Peter Brooker

On Saturday 18th February, the Garden Club began its 2017 year with a visit to the property of Lavina and Shaun. About 18 Nimbin Garden Club members and guests made it to this remarkable property.

This was not your typical Garden Club venue with its closely tended garden beds dotted strategically about the house with their blazing summer colours and subdued hues, some in full sun, some in dappled shade. This is a place of other priorities although there is a large vegetable garden, currently left alone due to the withering heat, and an orchard. There is also a creek, once used by the old Barkers Vale school as a swimming hole.

Lavina grows enough garlic for her family needs, recognising both its flavour and health benefits. It may also be a gentle nod to the Italian family who were the original owners and who grew grapes for wine and made salami to go with it. Only one of the original vines remains, this might be a good thing as rumour has it visitors enjoyed the wine a little too much.

Lavina and Shaun moved from Blue Knob five years ago with the intention of renovating the old Queenslander that hid behind a facade of blonde brick. When she says "renovate" she

actually means "restore" and to do that she needs to remove the blonde brick shell the original owners had used to hide the Queenslander, as well as other true renovations. This would be a mammoth undertaking and one they don't have time for, so they have abandoned the idea.

Flame trees and fig trees have been planted on the 45-acre property to provide shade, not for flower beds but for what takes priority in their lives. Lavina and Shaun have provided a home for animals that have been neglected or abandoned. They have built five-star accommodation for Winston the race horse and Jack the carriage horse who, for unknown reasons, is startled by the noise of gravel under the carriage wheels as they moved from softer or more solid surfaces. A startled carriage horse can so easily change a bride's beaming smile to a look of abject terror. King shares the same mother as Jack, and Stanley is a Fresian cross – no, Fresian is not only a breed of cow.

The four horses share the property with two cows, Barney and Neil, as well as Molly and Mavis, two rescued donkeys. Molly is Mavis's mother but sadly her father died and is buried on the property. Molly is about 22 years old and prior to rescue had given birth to 10 foals. Donkeys can live 45 years

and make great 'watch dogs' who will chase wild dogs. Speaking of dogs, there are six of them. Barbara, a lovely Irish Wolfhound was rescued from Casino pound four years ago, and no doubt there is a similar history for Reg, Brian, Doris, Gladys and Norman.

Quite some time ago an acquaintance asked Lavina to look after five cockatiels. That acquaintance has not been seen since, and now there are 25 cockatiels, so if anyone would like some and will provide a good home, Lavina would be happy to give some away.

Our thanks to Lavina and Shaun for allowing us to visit their property. Our next Garden Club meeting will be held at 2pm on Saturday 18th March at Ken and Adrian's property at 365 Mountain Top Road, Mountain Top/Georgica. There is a square cream letter box at the front gate with "365" clearly marked. If approaching from the north, the driveway is a little difficult to turn into, so it is best to first turn around in the driveway opposite. Ken and Adrian advise walking shoes and that thongs or sandals are not a good idea.

Don't forget your cup, a chair and a plate to share together with any plants, cuttings or seedlings for the plant table. New members are always welcome.

What happens in the spirit world?

by Robin Stein, Intuitive healer

Everything that happens in our physical world has corresponding experiences in the spirit world.

We don't eat, of course, but life in the physical world is practised and by the time we are ready to be born into the physical world, we are fully prepared for the life we will have in every single detail.

And further, we are constantly coached and assisted throughout that physical life. But sadly, not all of us are listening.

Frequently, I have become aware that while my body slept, I was taken to lectures in spirit throughout the night. I was highly aware of being in a class situation, listening to a lecturer teach the class.

And while moving through the spirit 'university' to my class, I was constantly reminded about the similarities with the physical world – except for one

particular aspect.

While I 'knew' others were present in the class, and even heard some ask questions, then heard the answer the lecturer gave, I have never actually seen another student in spirit while attending any of the lectures. Clearly, I was not there to socialise. I was there only to learn.

While moving through the corridors, I found it very similar to most universities in the physical world. Through each of the closed doors I passed, I could hear singing, music, acting and all kinds of other classes in progress.

Whatever we will do here on Earth, we begin classes to 'hone our craft' long before we are born. Children called a 'prodigy' in this life, have had an enormous amount of training in spirit. But of course, we don't study everything.

We still need to develop what we will do once we are here, as well as to gain experience or to be inspired. And we often meet certain

souls with whom we have been practising in spirit.

When a child is in spirit waiting to be born, they spend time with a grandparent or other family member until the time is right for them to be born. Some have been here before, but for whatever reason, they needed to return to spirit before being born. I have proved over and over again, that many do return.

For more than 30 years in this life, I have assisted infertile couples to conceive naturally with an incredible success rate. Often the woman has had many miscarriages before they find me, so I make a request for the woman to write a letter to the soul she has lost.

I also request that they purchase a small toy to put with their letter. And when they have it all together, I ask them to put it into a drawer in their bedroom. Eventually, they conceive and give birth to their baby and the letter they have put away

is completely forgotten.

At some point when the child is about 3 or 4 years old, they will happen to be playing in the parent's bedroom and they will find the letter and the gift the mother has put away in her draw and then forgotten. The first time this occurred, the four year old boy went running to his mother holding the letter and the toy, which was a tiny teddy bear.

"Look Mummy," He yelled as he burst into the kitchen where his mother was cooking. "I found the letter you wrote to me and my teddy!" Startled, his Mum asked him how he knew it was for him. And the little boy told his mother that he had been with her when she wrote the letter and that she was crying...

It gives these women a great deal of comfort to know that the child they lost has returned to them. And it gives me comfort as well, in spite of having a foot in both worlds.

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Hunt for the wild taro

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

Sadly, black taro and elephant ears are no good for eating.

While classified *Colocasia esculenta*, the same species as the edible variety, these ornamental plants do not produce the large underground corms that are eaten as a staple food in tropical countries all over the world.

Those nutritious starchy edible yams require leaching before consumption to remove high levels of oxalic acid, but this food source sustains millions around the planet. The leaves too, twice boiled, are tasty and nutritious in soups and other dishes.

The decorative varieties of this species, however, bred primarily for showy leaves, do not produce a burly edible tuber suitable to feed large families. These attractive plants put more effort into their foliage and reproduce vegetatively, rapidly and persistently. The oxalic acid levels contained in the plant tissues are also extremely high, and there are reports of itching tongue and discomfort after eating, even after copious boiling.

Black taro grows vigorously in the subtropics where there is plenty of moisture. It is popular in pond and pool landscaping. Creek banks and swampy regions are also a favoured habitat. When escaped into waterways, taro can choke the flow, form thick clumps and displace natives, both plants and wildlife due to its toxicity. Disrupting the progress of water, these plants collect silt in their roots, which become a stinky mess. Clumps of taro can break off during floods and spread downstream, establishing new infestations.

Wild taro can be a big problem. In South-east Qld, the Enoggera Creek catchment group, Save Our Waterways Now has prioritised this weed. They organise regular working bees to



Elephant ears



Turtle vine

manage its impact. Black taro is a runaway in the Nimbin valley and other parts of the Northern Rivers, with several hotspots around. Some of these infestations are quite large.

Management of wild taro is not easy. Herbicides are not effective as the waxy cuticles of the leaves simply repel the liquid. (Glyphosate is now labelled a 'probable carcinogen' by WHO, so not recommended for use anywhere, let alone on a creek bank.)

Manual removal can be done when water levels are lower in the drier periods. Wear protective clothing as sap from this plant is very irritant. Take care in handling and try not to break the stems.

Wild taro is heavy, so team work is essential. Weeded material can be carried above the water line and covered with black plastic to cook and break down. Follow up is essential, as root

fragments will regrow, but the job will get easier over time. Persistence pays off. Monitor carefully downstream and ensure new incursions are dealt with promptly before they establish in a big way.

Removal of taro should be done in conjunction with replanting the creek banks. Suitable species include sandpaper fig, lomandra, carex and lilly pilli to stabilise the disturbed soil.

Lesser known is *Callisia repens*, aka turtle vine or creeping inch plant (*lower pic*), another species with potential to invade bushland. It forms dense mats which exclude other vegetation. Though small and delicate, it is exceptionally hardy.

This innocuous looking creeper has been observed surviving weeks in a bucket on a veranda with no water, and still looks as fresh as the day it was removed from the garden. It has a remarkable potential to withstand drought or total neglect. And it thrives in the wild. You hardly notice it at first and then suddenly it's everywhere.

Ensure garden waste is disposed of responsibly and not chucked down the gully or dumped by the roadside or in bushland. Alternative disposal methods include hot composting, weed tea, or feeding to worms.

Happy weeding.

IMPLEMENTING POLY CULTURE

by Geoff Dawe

It is sometimes thought that the sustainability of agriculture is achieved by buying from farmer's markets.

Farmer's markets are part of sustainability in that they localise the marketing of food, and potentially, fibre. The amount a farmer locally markets varies on a scale. At one end of the scale is the farmer's mouth for food, or the farmer's own use, for fibre. The other end of the scale involves export overseas.

New Zealand nevertheless, is more localised than Britain. Local farmer's markets are a big step toward sustainability in that they are on the end of the scale closer to the farmer's mouth than to Britain.

Farmer's markets are undoubtedly part of sustainability as organic agriculture is part of sustainability, but agricultural sustainability is more complex than either of these.

Polyculture is the cat in the bag for agricultural sustainability. The cat is in the bag and not let out because the more polyculture is brought on-board in agriculture the more the farmer becomes uneconomic in terms of the industrial system. After all, monoculture, or single species farming, mostly occurred to make more efficient (economic) farm machinery. Machine-

use is an exceptional demand that the environment is marshalled to aid in "earning a living".

In the return to the Stone Age it is possible to see that a tribe of people living in the sub-tropics may be living in say, bamboo framed, domed, leaf covered huts of bangalow palm, or, the exotics bat plant (*Tacca Chantrieri*) or banna grass. The people may be surrounded by food forests and vegetable gardens. These people might regard the basis of their economy (apart from the land), as their food trees.

Another part of the economy may involve a tribe's cloth making looms. This is initially a necessity as the civilised have weakened themselves so are in danger of exposure. However, even the wooden looms are marked for redundancy with the earnest desire to recover the scientifically validated aptitude of the human body to generate internal body heat.

Nevertheless, in the short-term or this immediate time, increasing diversity or polyculture into farming can only be carried out experimentally, as a hobby, or as an adjunct to the means by which one normally earns a living.

Some people might currently say they are earning a living with polyculture produce, but if this is examined it will be noticed that it is a limited polyculture with just a few species.

To come into its own, polyculture, which is actually an extension of biodiversity conservation, is part of a society that continually looks toward making the agricultural system increasingly diverse. That is, the society is not (dis-)organised to restrict diversity in order to increase its economic growth.

In effect, the basis of the economy; the gardened land, is "dressed" with human food and fibre plants and other plants that embellish the land basis of the economy. All of it emphasises live growth and the sacred: the sacredness of the miracle of all life. The emphasis on a society of life is movement well away from the dead and deadening machines.

The huts are initially made with dead materials, but the Stone Age does not remove the anticipatory function of the human pre-frontal cortex. Humans are able to grow bamboo where it is required for a future live-framed domed hut. The pre-frontal cortex enables humans to also experiment with growing live, large-leaved vines over the domes, "tiling" them as the vines grow. A major point here, is that housing is now only shelter as people are more inclined to see the whole world as their house. Such is the more holistic world of polyculture and biodiversity conservation.

In love with the underdog

I am in love with wolves. That's a lucky thing, because for the past few nights I can't sleep for the howling. These are not wolves though, but their distant relatives, the Australian dingo, *Canis lupus dingo*, and most likely various mixed-breed hybrids of the dingo and the domestic dog, *Canis lupus familiaris*.



by Anastasia Guise

Before their cascading harmonies have even finished ringing out across the valley, there are demands for eradication by poison baiting. People are practically frothing at the mouths, with bare consideration of either the mentality behind eradication – or its methodology.

The wolf once held a similar place in the global consciousness – a vicious pest to be exterminated completely – and yet has regained some respect as beneficial to biodiversity, as an apex predator, and overwhelmingly benign to humans.

Barry Lopez's work, *Of Wolves and Men*, taught me both the beauty and the tragedy of the wolf. It describes both the vicious and cruel methods of the wolf's extermination, as well as the zealous hatred, mistrust and savagery which lay at the centre of the propaganda

espoused to support it.

Shotguns, crude steel traps, and carcasses laced with strychnine resulted in agonising deaths by the thousands. Trappers, government, and "naturalists" alike believed – and perpetuated – the myth that wolves in particular posed an almost catastrophic threat to humans, when this was far from the case.

There were once twenty or thirty subspecies of wolves, and they ranged across Europe, from the Mediterranean to Portugal, and from Greece to Russia, to easternmost Siberia, and Afghanistan, India, China, and Japan. In the Americas, wolves were to be found from present-day Mexico City, to the Arctic, meaning that they occupied, and had adapted to an array of environments.

Wolves are highly

intelligent and socially organised: individual wolves as well as packs have distinct personalities, recognisable from a distance and consistent over time. Having said that, it has been suggested that wolf "culture" evolves just like human culture – and that youngsters may adopt innovative or new behaviour which may eventually spread to other wolf packs or be passed on to offspring.

Like Australian dingoes, the alpha female alone will breed in any given year, with the other members of the pack working to feed and raise the cubs. Adult siblings recognise one another after long periods apart; they communicate using yips, growls and howls, and a small pack will purposely harmonise their howling to make the pack sound larger, or perhaps just to sing.

Wolves in North America and Canada have impressive geographical ranges, and varied ingenious hunting strategies. They seem to be able to orient themselves in white-out blizzards, and if they tuck their nose into their tail, they can happily sit out a winter blizzard at forty centigrade below zero.

But beyond anything, the beauty of the wolf – and the dingo – is a physical thing.

Their upright ears, sensitive muzzles, and intelligent eyes; the astonishing array of colours, in the case of the wolf, from jet black to pure white, tan, red, and steel grey. The kind of liquid-and-shadow way in which they move through a landscape.

Called "cowardly" in America, and "cunning" in Australia, the demonisation of wild canids has primarily accompanied the expansion of economic interests in cattle farming, agriculture and cropping. These interests imposed on territories and eradicated food sources, just as they decimated ecosystems and colonised sovereign peoples. In Tasmania, such mythology drove the thylacine to extinction. Globally, it has resulted in the extermination of more than half of wolf subspecies, and 90 per cent of wolf populations.

In Australia, the legal status of the dingo is contradictory. It is considered native wildlife, because it had established stable and integrated populations in Australia pre-European colonisation, although it is thought to have been introduced to Australia by Indigenous people about 5000 years ago.

In most Australian states, however, it is legally



1080 sign in Yuraygir National Park, 2016

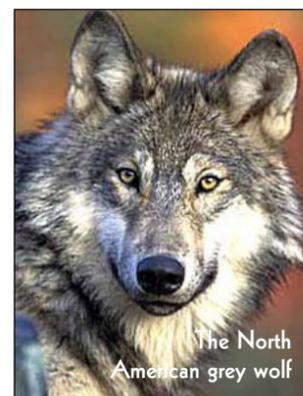
Photo: Anastasia Guise

considered a pest, with the exception of enjoying full protection within National Parks. (However, National Parks routinely carry out 1080 baiting which does impact dingoes – to what extent is unknown).

What complicates the issue is that domestic dogs have interbred with dingo populations to the point that it is difficult to ascertain the "purity" of dingoes anywhere, and this is a major factor in it being listed as vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Biodiversity.

An emerging argument, following the recognition of the importance of apex predators in maintaining biodiversity – and the lauded re-introduction of the wolf into Yellowstone National Park – is that it is perhaps not the "purity" of the dingo that really matters, but whether it plays its proper role in the ecosystem.

What makes the demonisation of wild canines so galling is the hypocrisy of



The North American grey wolf

a mostly suburban populace insistent on keeping domestic dogs, and who maintain a vast pet meat industry on an already-stressed planet, and create a wild dog problem through neglect and mismanagement, all the while crying for a baiting program designed to protect the steak or lamb cutlet headed towards their – and their canine companions' plates.

Consider the new trend towards vegan dogs and things get even more absurd!

What has not changed is a human fascination with canines. Their beauty, companionship, and resilience have accompanied us through the ages: let's hope they stay for many more.

Anastasia is an author and environmentalist based on the North Coast of NSW. Her first book, *Rapture* is a collection of environmental essays, soul stories and unsung folk songs. Facebook: [anastasiaguiseauthor](https://www.facebook.com/anastasiaguiseauthor)

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

It's not often that koala rehabilitators from across NSW get together, but that's exactly what happened last month in Port Macquarie. While we must all abide by the conditions of our licence, koala rehabbers operate pretty independently of each other, not for any other reason than our groups are geographically dispersed, we have developed different models of service delivery and we have looked in different directions for support.

Nevertheless, twelve carers from the State's four specialist groups, Friends of the Koala, the Koala Preservation Society Australia (Port Macquarie Koala Hospital), Port Stephens Koalas and Koalas in Care based in Taree, the NSW Wildlife Council and WIRES, plus representatives from the University of Sydney's Koala Health Hub and Wildlife Clinic at Camden, a geneticist from the Australian Museum Research Institute's 'Team Koala' and nine Office of Environment & Heritage staffers met to workshop actions needed to support and improve koala rehabilitation operations across NSW.

To give a bit of context to the sector's licensed activities, during the 2015-16 reporting year 1,162 koalas were admitted into care across NSW – 309 by Friends of the Koala, 171 by the Koala Preservation Society Australia, 90 by Koalas in Care, 87 by Port Stephens Koalas and 458 by various WIRES branches. 47 koalas were admitted by other groups and individuals whose fauna rehabilitation licence include koalas. Across the board, 350 koalas were released back into the wild.

You will be aware that the NSW government is developing a whole-of-government koala strategy aimed at stabilising and then increasing koala numbers in NSW. The strategy is to be based on the eleven recommendations of the Chief Scientist's *Report of the Independent*

Review into the Decline of Koala Populations in Key Areas of NSW which was released in December 2016. The recommendations fall far short of putting a stop to the key, overarching cause of koala collapse, which is anthropogenically-induced changes to habitat. If implemented however they do have potential for making a difference; although whether sufficient to secure the future of koalas in the Northern Rivers is problematic.

Rather unexpectedly, the Report acknowledges some of the contribution that koala rehab groups are making to koala conservation. Sure, the focus is on the front-line role groups play in the recovery of individual koalas, but some recognition is better than none. The opportunity to convene in Port was greeted enthusiastically.

So what did the day achieve? Not surprisingly, a shared commonality of interest around the potential for standardising triage and clinical/treatment practices and improving data collection and sharing. A wide range of other "needs" was identified as well, including affordable access to the scientific literature, assisted training, genetic sampling and disease testing protocols, potential for release sites on the Park-estate, post-release monitoring, supporting our wonderful veterinarians and carer well-being.

But a workshop is the easy part; translating the content of butchers paper and post-it notes into agreed, costed projects is much harder and that's where we are at present. A few things may be finalised and implemented in this financial year but the rest will feed into the four remaining years of the Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Project. This is the framework and annual funding mechanism (a dismal \$800,000 in 2016-2017) for delivering some of the strategy's components and for guiding



In dry, hot spells, koalas also like a drink

on-ground koala management through an amended Priorities Action Statement.

The Chief Scientist correctly identifies urbanisation as a significant threat to koalas on the North Coast and a couple of her recommendations give us priority. Around 100,000 people are expected to descend on our region over the next 20 years. Mega residential projects such as Kings Forest on the Tweed Coast and the West Byron Urban Release Area on the Byron Coast will have a massive impact on koala survival. Even away from the coast, koala habitat will be chipped away by residential re-zoning proposals and poor decision-making, Lismore Council's recent decision to defy the staff's recommendation and to make environmental protection zones voluntary on agricultural land, being a case in point.

The number of visitors to our region is increasing as well. South-east Queensland's population is projected to grow by well over a million by 2036. We are already experiencing significant recreational use by our northern neighbours on our roads, on beaches, in National Parks. Then there is the poor state of native forest health brought about by the emergence a decade ago of intensive harvesting practices in public forests, the expansion of

Bell Miner Associated Dieback (BMAD) and the number of active Private Native Forestry licences. All are impacting on koala numbers so we were disappointed that the Chief Scientist had little to say about forestry matters.

Comment on the koala strategy proposal and associated documents has now closed. The finalised strategy is expected mid-year. We fervently hope that the NSW government's capacity for effective koala conservation is genuine and that positive outcomes will be achieved. In the meantime, Friends of the Koala and our supporters will get on with what we've been doing for the past 30 years, working for koala survival in the Northern Rivers.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please phone Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233 or use our new online sighting tool at: www.friendsofthekoala.org The website also provides information about koalas, their food trees, how you can assist koala conservation, and a whole lot more. We can also be emailed: info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone (02) 6622-1233. Please follow us on Facebook.

To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat ring the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 131-555.

Theraphi a first for Lismore, and Australia

Lismore residents are fortunate to be the location the 'Flower of Light' has chosen for its new home.

Being the first device in Australia, that's something to celebrate, according to John Hardgrave (pictured), director and owner of 'Flower of Light'.



"We feel our practice, using the Theraphi Device and our other modalities of Light and Vibrational Healing, will really make a difference in the community," he said.

The Theraphi is an electronic device that produces a radiative bio-active plasma field. Precise electromagnetic frequencies derived from hydrogen and phi-ratio harmonics are modulated and pass through a unique mixture of noble gases. The resulting super-coherent plasma-wave field restores order to the body's cellular regenerative system, reversing the entropy of the disease process.

The Theraphi technology has the ability to provide an influence on general

well-being, enhancement of the immune system and reduction of healing times. Some of the benefits and positive results people describe after their Theraphi sessions include: pain reduction, inflammation reduction, higher energy levels, anti-ageing, improved circulation and enhanced immune system responses.

The inspiration for the creation of this device is based on the famous pioneering efforts of Nicola Tesla, George Lakhovsky, Royal Raymond Rife and especially Antione Priore in France.

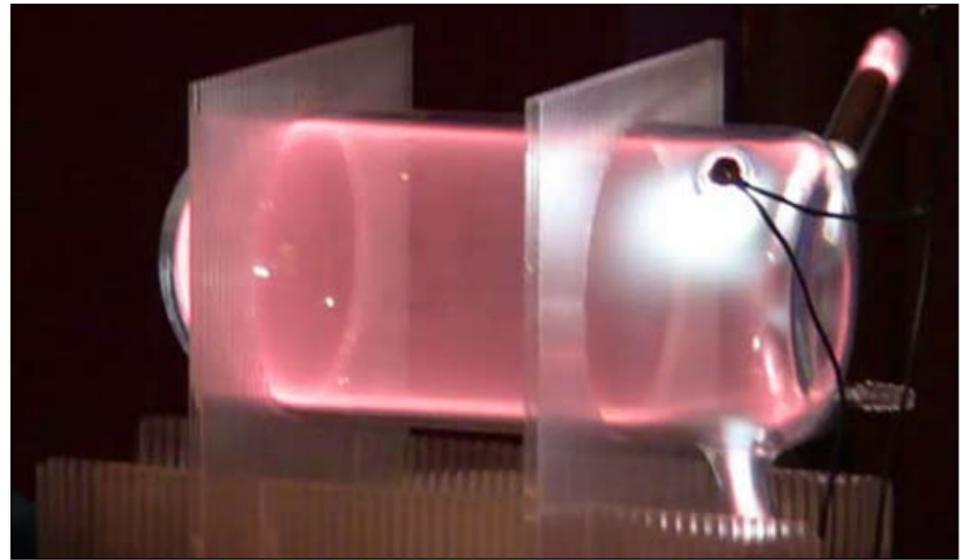
While the Theraphi is a new device at this point,

hundreds and hundreds of rigorous tests have been done on the predecessor device invented by Priore. Many of the experiments and tests were done by prestigious members of the French Academy of Sciences.

Additionally, John has received some remarkable testimonials from clients who have experienced the field effects, some people experience onset of various emotions, and increased energy levels are common. Increased circulation, warmth and tingling sensations have been reported.

Sacral cranial professionals have suggested the 'sacral cranial' spine liquid pump changes, reaching the spine pump 'still point' normally associated with a turning point in healing.

Overnight analysis of Heart Rate Variability (HRV) has shown increases in metabolism and heart rate for several days after exposure. In a large number of cases the client has also



experienced a feeling of bliss or euphoria, according to John Matthews.

The actual healing system is the body's own cellular regeneration system. Biological systems use longitudinal EM waves. The Theraphi system tailors these specific wave forms generating a rich information field. This kind of strong charge field is by definition simply

the electrical opposite of swelling, cyst and tumour growth. It is also known for increasing circulation and sensation in areas where these have been limited or lost.

The Theraphi Process is a holistic, non-invasive method during which the cells of the body are restored to a healthier state. Information about this simple, yet powerful

treatment can be viewed on the website: <https://theraphi.com.au> where there are also amazing stories of clients who have benefitted from the Theraphi.

Visit 'Flower of Light' in the Lismore CBD, located at 29 Orion Street, opposite the Catholic Cathedral. Book online or phone (02) 6622-3835.

See the Special Offer at: <https://theraphi.com.au/offer>

Overcoming the limitations of addiction

The process of becoming free of substance dependence was simply a matter of allowing a daily power yoga practice to take over the role that addiction had been performing.

A preliminary priming with certain homeopathic remedies and the release of caffeine and sugar set me up for transformation. Once my yoga practice was established there was no need or room for harmful addictions, given the opportunity my body had no hesitation in recognising and choosing its preferred option. A cure for addiction and the related chronic health problems is available to anyone who is ready and wants it, or not.

In a world full of demands and expectations, cannabis was there for me, it allowed me to establish reality on my own terms. When the time was right yoga presented itself as a more sustainable and fulfilling method of providing that role, all but one of my non-nutritional supports happily moving aside to make way for it.

Alcohol was the one that required a little more convincing. It spoke persuasively to me of its value as a reward for all my great efforts, suggesting that I deserved it. A relatively short time later it became clear that it too had outlived its usefulness, and yoga was granted the total responsibility for my personal management. I now started to really experience a full range of rewards of a far more powerful and positive nature.

Baron Baptiste states on the cover of his definitive book on Yoga, *Journey into Power*, "Free your true self, sculpt your ideal body and transform your life with Yoga". In the introduction he goes on to say "If I seem to be making a lot of promises to you here, that's because I am, if you work the principles in this book I guarantee you will journey into power in every area of your life."

When you take that journey into power it goes without saying that you will no



Vital Choices

by David Ward

longer have a requirement for support from addictive substances. One by one they will each be permanently released, in a moment, leaving one healthy and free to pursue the ongoing path of evolution.

During the home practice of yoga, we come face to face with our limitations and learn to thrive on the challenge to overcome them. In the early stages, our arms may want to buckle in a high push-up position, or we may find it difficult to get off our knees in a low push-up position (chaturanga dandassana), but just saying those Sanscrit words seems to instil a sense of power, driving us to action.

At the same time as this, we are subconsciously facing our limitations around substance dependence, the magic of Yoga is unfolding and almost before we realise it we have been set free from all that doesn't serve our highest potential.

The Vital Choices Program offers alternative drug and alcohol support with proven strategies to end all addictions. For anyone serious about fast-tracking their recovery for a return to self-reliance and all that that brings, call David on 0447-820-510.

How it could be Victimhood vs empowerment

Imagine... feeling like being exactly in the right place, happy to be alive, happy to be of service... and because of that having a genuine sense of belonging.

There is no doubt whatsoever that my current life situation is the best it can be, given the circumstances. It's not perfect but real. I feel grateful for every moment, knowing that the dynamics of permanent change are beyond my control, just like the seasonal changes of the year.

I'm at peace with what is. Still, I'm acting to the best of my knowledge, striving to be a useful and caring member of my community.

Just as I wish for peace and justice in the world, I spread an atmosphere of peace around me and refrain from counterproductive judgements. I have overcome the fear of loss because I trust the flow of life.

Everyone and everything is part of the same intelligence, each one of us important and worthy as we are, with no exception...

Isn't most trouble of humanity caused by greed, ignorance, hurt from the past and lack of respect? Wouldn't it change dramatically if we applied honest reflection and unconditional love?

I've been pondering the homemade quagmires that tend to drown our happiness.



by Betti Wille

"Nobody can get into the heart of your experience and fix anything for you. If you want to make your own internal experience more hospitable, only you can do that work." – Ethan Nichtern

For example: When identifying with a personal victim role I don't allow myself to move beyond it. To free myself I have to make a crucial decision.

Let the subject be illuminated by a personal reflection: Even though I was a single child, my mother couldn't give me a lot of attention. She was too hung up within her own story. Because the communication with my primary caregiver was embossed by lack of listening, there was an ongoing theme during my life: "Why doesn't anyone listen to me?"

I was angry at the world as if it had betrayed me and grief-ridden by having had such a dysfunctional upbringing. As a result, a sense of safety in relationships was hard to find. And sometimes anger would spoil my days, and the days of other people, too. I'm sure some of you can relate to this.

In my forties, I happened to have a revolutionary insight: I needed to learn to listen and become what I was looking for. No-one else could ever do this for me. Having had enough of the same old story again and again, I began to inquire into the world of 'listening'. Books and films with significant messages appeared. I would search the internet; listen to TED talks, Dharma talks and tutorials on active listening.

I found myself observing and reflecting on communication. Eventually I began to practise active listening and have been thrilled by the depths of people around me ever since.

"Why doesn't anyone listen to me?" is a story from the past. Gratitude fills its space. And my writing seems to emerge from that place, too.

I would love to hear from readers who have had similar empowering experiences.

Betti is best contacted by email: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com



by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

Everyone's looking for the happy place. This is where life is beautiful, there are no pressures on us and no stress, this is where we can relax and enjoy what the world has to offer. Horses also look for the happy place. When horses are in the happy place they can relax and unwind their muscles, their minds are open to learning, as there is no stress, and they are much more open to their human.

Far too frequently when I'm out and about training horses and their humans, I find situations where there is no happy place. Sometimes people are so controlling, they micro-manage every moment, constantly applying aids and constantly communicating with their horse. After a while horses tire of this and start exhibiting escapist behaviours, which the humans perceive as being 'naughty' or 'resistant'. In reality all they're saying is 'hey, give us a break'.

When riding or doing ground-work with a horse, you apply a signal (the aid) wait for the response and then release the aid. It's a good idea then to

just go along as you are and let your horse have a moment to digest the idea, fulfil the job that you were asking for and just be a horse. For example, if you are lunging your horse and you ask for more speed. When the horse goes faster, just relax in the centre and let the horse go around, that is after all what you asked for. Instead I see people constantly moving the whip, giving voice aids and generally driving along a horse that's already going!

The result of this is that the horse has to tune out the human, it's necessary for survival. If the human is constantly yabbering away by constantly using aids (this is language to a horse) when it doesn't mean anything, the horse must tune you out or go crazy. So after a while the horse isn't responding to the whip anymore, or the voice or the body language, and has effectively been de-trained. At this point most humans blame the horse. Instead of looking at what they're doing and changing that, they employ more aggressive methods to get the result they want.

Whenever you're riding or doing ground-work or lunging or anything

with your horse there must be more happy places than pressured places. Heaps more. Make a point when you're working your horse to find places where you can remove ALL pressure. Develop a headspace where this is what you're looking for. Often people become fixated with applying aids but forget the much more important place of removing all aids and allowing your horse to be. This is after all the reason horses respond to us, not because we're applying an aid but because they know we're going to remove it. If you do not remove the aids regularly your horse will stop responding.

Every horse everywhere is always looking for the happy place, so give it to them, give them lots of it and your horse will become more and more willing and softer. It's much nicer for you too; you can spend more time just enjoying being with your horse in the happy place together.

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Equine self-medication

by Les Rees, Equine Naturopath & Sports Therapist

I think there is little doubt that animals self-medicate; anyone who has a dog or cat will have witnessed them eating grass to make them regurgitate.

There is also plenty of evidence of animals self-medicating dating back to ancient civilizations, as scholars wrote about their observations and experimented with those herbs selected by animals to cure ailments common to animals and humans. This led to the development of herbal medicine as information was exchanged and experimentation led the way to an understanding of the effects of a significant array of herbal plants and their medicinal properties.

Until recently, the scientific fraternity has been unwilling to accept that animals self-medicate. However, there has been a lot of interest building through the observations of eminent animal behaviourists like Diane Fossey and Jane Goodall, who have witnessed sick animals seeking and eating specific plants not normally part of their diet, resulting in the relief of the symptoms of obvious health disorders. Today there is a vast amount of information available through the efforts of dedicated zoologists, pharmacologists and herbalists who have examined the medicinal properties of the herbs and their actions on the body.

Studies suggest that horses in the wild not only have the appearance of looking healthy, but when tested, showed little signs of parasite infestations or worm burdens. Moreover, they had resistance to diseases normally found to affect their domestic counterparts. This is hardly surprising given that these horses don't have access to the medicinal herbs that their wild counterparts have as they can graze freely, continually moving onto new ground. Wild horses often eat plants known to be quite toxic, but which when eaten in small quantities at any one time, act as medicines triggering specific systems within the body to work more efficiently and subsequently re-balancing them so that normal health can be restored.

Some examples of domestic horses self-medicating can be seen when horses pick at rose hips and nettles, or dig at the ground for clay. The rosehips have high quantities of vitamin C, iron, copper and biotin. They are an excellent blood cleanser, good for the kidneys, liver and adrenal glands, as well as being an immune stimulant. Nettles are also high in



iron and are very effective as an arterial tonic and in blood oxygenation. Clay is an inert substance; however, it does bind toxins enabling them to be evacuated from the body and it also protects the lining of the gut, having an antacid effect, absorbing excess fluids and subsequently curbing diarrhoea.

In an ideal world the horse owner would incorporate herbal leys in areas protected by larger plants that provide shade and nutrients in order for their horses to be able to self-medicate. However, that is a big ask as it involves financial outlay that a lot of horse owners can ill afford.

I've been an equine naturopath for many years and even after all this time, I'm still amazed at how well horses respond to herbal medicine. Many people say that their horses are fussy and won't eat anything with medications included in their normal feed, but if I'd had a dollar bet for every one of those horses having the opposite response, I'd be a rich woman! I'm sure that they have the ability to recognise that the nutrients are beneficial to them.

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