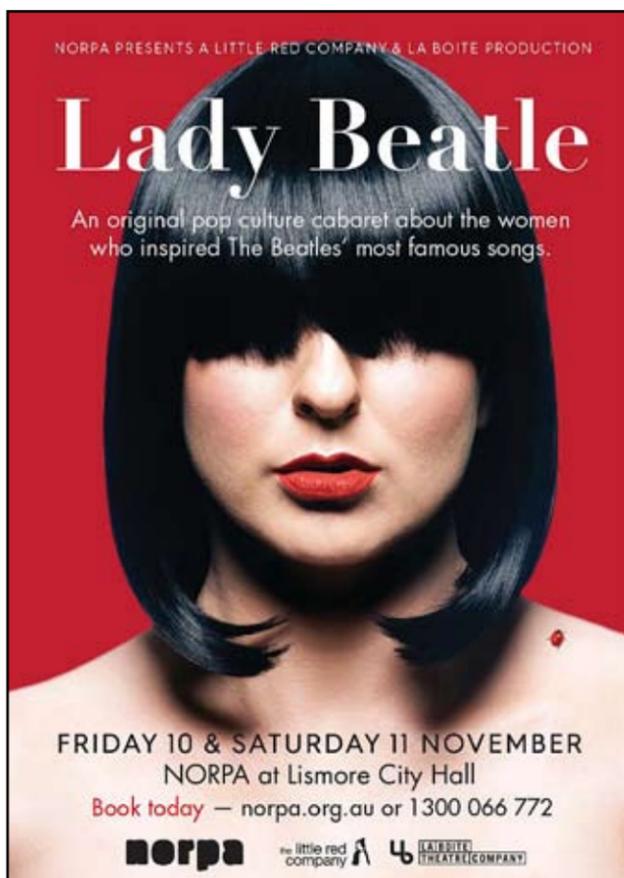


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The nature of things



'Eden Trashed' by Theodore Kennet-Raj



'Forest Keeper' by Gerard Lyneham

A TASTE OF ART



blueknobhall gallery

Blue Knob Ceramic Studio
Blue Knob Cafe

Gallery & Cafe hours:
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Sat 8:30am - 2pm, Sun 10am - 4pm

Ceramic Studio: Thurs - Sat 10am - 3pm
Ph: 0266897449 www.blueknobgallery.com

The new exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is titled 'The Nature of Things'.

Nature: it's all around us and part of us, the phenomena of the physical world collectively, plants, animals, the landscape, earth, and all those invisible cells/energy that make up everything we see, feel or touch.

The word 'nature' has fluidity to it and we also use it to describe the basic character, or qualities of something or someone: "the nature of his circumstances is...", "...she has a friendly nature."

Things: we collect them, imbue them with qualities that take on significance and have their own 'nature' or personality. We often call something a 'Thing' when we can't or don't want to give it a name.

Our 'things', we love them or hate them, but the artists who are exhibiting in this new exhibition have gone above and beyond – into nature, the natural, the elements of the earth – and have contributed works that have come out of a love of the arts, a dedication to all nature and all things...

Blue Knob Ceramic Studio

Is also exhibiting works from the participants who gather weekly and put their hearts into the clay and have produced some wonderful 'things' to exhibit and sell. For many it is their first experience of selling in a Gallery and under the 'guidance' of Heather Kimber they have shown what dedication, fun and playing in the materials of the earth can do.

The Opening night is Friday 6th October at 6.30pm. Our guest to open the show is Chris Hyde with Blue Knob Choir performing on the night. A meal is available please call the Gallery 6689-7449 or email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au if you would like to stay for dinner.

Judy Cassab Portrait donation

Blue Knob Hall Gallery has had the honour of being the recipient of a lithograph print titled 'Guitar Player' by the renowned Australian artist Judy Cassab (1920 – 2015).

Through her son John Seed and

family, she had a long association with people in the Lismore/Channon area and became very close to people's hearts. Donated to the Gallery by her son John and family, on her behalf, it will have its own permanent place to hang in our community Gallery.

Judy Cassab was the first woman to win the Archibald Prize twice for her portraits 'Stanislaus Rapotec' (1960) and 'Portrait of Margo Lewers' (1967) She was an artist of immense insight and imagination, and as well as painting portraits of social luminaries, royals, fellow artists, family and friends, she was also a prolific draughtswoman, printmaker and an acclaimed landscape artist.

Our deepest gratitude goes to her family in thinking of us as a place to hold one of her beautiful pieces. If you would like to know more about Judy Cassab and her work, you can go to: www.judycassab.com

Artists & Friends Lunch

The next Artist's & Friends Lunch will be held on Thurs 26th October at 12.30pm with a set menu, \$20 per person for main and dessert. Please email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au or phone 6689-7449 for more information.



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Small things matter



Long-eared bat being held



Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat

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

Small things matter in our latest exhibition at the Nimbin Artists Gallery. Artist Angela Parr has an important message within her work that allows art to meet wildlife while leading us to the value of conservation of our native microbats.

Angela's art techniques, in graphite and pastels, allow the delicate and intriguing beauty of these animals to come through their rather

negative press.

Bats, specifically micro bats (Microchiropteran bats) are recognised as important indicators of levels of biodiversity due to individual species often having specific habitat requirements. Microbats are predominantly insectivorous, and as insects are dependent upon plants, changes in the bat communities in terms of species richness and diversity may indicate problems

within the ecosystem.

Micro bats are highly mobile mammals that are able to exploit all aspects of their landscapes, natural or urbanised. If their niche environmental requirements are altered (through primary productivity, urban development, fire and /or disease) their numbers are drastically altered.

Sadly, habitat loss and roost site disturbance are the biggest reasons for their declining numbers. Twelve micro bat species are listed as vulnerable within the Northern Rivers area, and as they are extremely important for the biodiversity of the region they live in. This is why Angela has chosen them as the focus of her artwork.

Beyond the Rainbow

Available now at Perceptio's & Nimbin Enviro Centre

Youth films inclusive to 24

Nimbin Youth Film Festival is excited to announce that the Senior Section (19-24 years) will be able to run again this year thanks to a major sponsorship from Rainbow Power Company. The competition was extended last year to include this section, with TAFE North Coast funding the prizes. Unfortunately this funding was unavailable this time around, and it was looking as though the section would be cancelled. With Rainbow Power Company on board for 2017, the 19-24 year old category will have a \$300 1st prize, \$200 2nd Prize & \$100 3rd Prize.



The Senior Section will also have two fabulous prizes to be won from Byron's SAE Qantm Creative Media Institute: two tickets to SAE Institute's Summer Series Film Workshop (multi-day workshop) in January 2018 (exact dates TBC).

The 0-18 year old section will also have a \$300 1st Prize sponsored by the Nimbin School of Arts. Social Futures Lismore are sponsoring the 2nd Prize of \$200 for this section, and Nimbin Hills Real Estate are providing a \$100 3rd Prize.

We also have two huge themed prizes in this year's competition that we are thrilled to announce. The Nimbin Community Drug Action Team (auspiced by NNIC) is providing a massive \$500 prize for the Party Safe Award. This prize will be awarded to the film that has the best message around partying SAFE with alcohol and minimising harm

from alcohol. This is part of the Senior Section, 19-24 years only. Films are to be a maximum of three minutes.

And this year, the Sustainability Prize is a huge \$400, thanks to sponsorship from Nimbin Neighbourhood & Information Centre and the Nimbin Environment Centre. This prize will be awarded to the film with the best message around sustainability and caring for the earth.

The competition will have many more prizes to be won and we would like to thank all the rest of our sponsors who make this event possible and fun! Thank you Lismore City Council, Nimbin Emporium, The Green Bank, Nimbin Apothecary, Armonica, Pot of Gold, and Nimbin Pizza & Trattoria.

There is still time to get on board with the festival and contribute a prize. We are currently still in need

of funding for trophies, so please contact the organisers if you would like to offer a donation or sponsorship at: nimbinfilm@gmail.com

With all these amazing prizes, the festival is set to be a huge event this year. We hope many of our local youth will be inspired to create a film and share their stories with the community. Although this is a competition, the most important aspect is the journey of creation that goes into each film. We hope that you have fun making your films!

For all entry information, please visit: www.nimbinyouthfilmfestival.com and download an entry form. You can view past films on YouTube and find us on Facebook for all updates. Entries close 17th November 2017 at 4pm and the Screening will take place on 2nd December 2017.



RETROSPECTIVE

'RetroSpective' is a selection of paintings by Leigh Arnold whose works are inspired by quantum physics, astronomy, mathematics and other arcane cosmologies.

Living in the Lismore area, Leigh works in both two and three-dimensional artmaking. His work is extremely inspirational as it embraces his 'gift of dyslexia' and his unique and highly intricate way of bringing the mathematical and geometric images he sees into extremely complex works of art.

Through his paintings, Leigh attempts to defy the flat surface that paintings occupy, originally through the creation of mathematical patterns which repeat themselves, sometimes growing in minutely measured increments.

In fact, Leigh is absorbed in the geometrically patterned nature of the world we live in, whether it occurs in nature, in

astronomy or in mathematics.

Leigh will bring to this exhibition a selection of works from his many years of residing in this region. Excitingly he will be exhibiting some large canvases which will provide viewers the opportunity to really be absorbed in depictions of the atmosphere. In many ways, Leigh's style of work is an example of where art meets science.

'RetroSpective' will be on show until 4th November at the Roxy Gallery, Kyogle.

With the end of a year fast approaching and the start of a new age getting ready to begin, the Roxy Gallery is once again offering practising artists and artisans opportunity to be a part of the gallery's annual end-of-year exhibition. For expressions of interest to contribute works for this exhibition, please contact Ruth on 6632-3518 or email: roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au

Faith, joy and disaster

'Faith, Joy and Other Disasters' is a group show which opens at the Serpentine Community Gallery on Friday 6th October at 6pm.

Long-standing Serpentine member and recent committee member, Lindsay Hunt suggested the theme. Together with his family, Lindsay is moving abroad and we wish him well. This exhibition is in his honour as a prolific contemporary Australian artist, a teacher and a proactive member in our arts community.

His two-part acrylic work 'A Soul Confronted by Something Vile #1 & #2' is included in the show. When asked about his approach to art Lindsay said, "My work, using various media including oil, acrylic, ink, pastel, charcoal and pencil, as well as using print techniques including woodcut and drypoint etching, is varied with subject matter drawn from my personal experience and perceptions of the world - often strongly expressed in a satirical and darkly poetic style."



'What is this Whispering in my Heart' by Paulette Hayes

With such a broad theme, open to interpretation by the talented artists of the Northern Rivers as they explore human experiences and the darker journeys of the soul, the exhibited artworks cover a vast range of subjects.

A maestro with mixed media, and winner of the inaugural Serpentine Art Prize, Lismore-based artist Paulette Hayes has submitted two works, 'Two Degrees' and 'What is this Whispering in my Heart?'

"The essence of my art is the human condition," says Paulette. "It is designed to appeal to both the heart and the mind, and is inspired by my internal and external worlds. When developing an idea, I ask myself 'How I can tell this story?' What materials, what techniques, what colours and what textures will enable me to express an emotion or an idea to convey what I want to say. I work predominantly with mixed media as part of my story telling - clay, paper, metal, fabric; they all have their own narrative to tell - and much time is spent finding a balance between the conceptual art and over-simplified work requiring no input from the viewer."

Drawing our attention to a universal issue, Paulette's 'Two Degrees', a figure covered with singed and burnt leaves, refers to the two degrees Celsius that the earth was expected to increase in temperature by the end of this century - of course we will be well over it. While with 'What



is this Whispering in my Heart?', the title taken from a book by Henry Reynolds, her story telling reminds us of Australia's past and Aboriginal massacres. The sculpture has 'leaves' around its neck - referencing the nameplates Aboriginal people had to wear around their necks - and lists many of the massacres in Australia.

Neil Howe's digital image 'Julia' repurposes social media to create a social commentary on contemporary politics and life in the 21st century. Having exhibited in 36 countries around the world, Howe's brand of satire and

wit has gained the artist a strong audience in Europe rather than here on our own shores where out of control political correctness has dulled the offerings available in the public and commercial gallery system.

'Julia' illustrates that pivotal moment when a leader is deposed by his own party and all his faith and joy is shattered and now he has to face the press with the victor looking on.

Specially created for the exhibition poster, Anthony Smith's original, digitally enhanced mixed media artwork 'Fires of Love',

presented as a limited edition HD print, symbolizes the beauty, passion and volatility of love as a feeling felt whenever it arises.

Everyone is welcome to attend the opening celebration. Light refreshments available. Come to the opening or drop by the gallery to view the full showcase of works, and help support our exciting artist community. Ends on 30th October.

The gallery is located at 17 Bridge Street, Lismore. For more info, phone (02) 6621-6845, or go to: www.serpentinearts.org

Future life: The yeast revolution

Flavour of the month

by Thom Culpeper

Paleo-hydrocarbons are on the wane, both as an economic plunder source and an affordable consumption regime. Our Earth, to some Gaia, has had enough of unconscious consumer idiocy. It is in revolt.

Consider: from stage left, a couple of actors, yeasts and sugars, thespian-strategists in the game of energy to offer a solution to the current abuse of the environment caused by the never-ending plunder and burden imposed on Earth by avaricious *Homo consumptionist*, the idiot tribe desecrating, pulverising and poisoning the very rock they live on.

Many planet-sharers and earth-life treat their patch with a little more concern than does wrecker-man.

A small budding form of life, yeast offers one solution, fermentation. Make your own, be part of an active process of creating your own energy solutions.

Harness the techniques and Gaia may cease her current grumbling.

To join the lighter side of life, the change of consciousness side, it can be instructive to delve into matters of brews, and in particular the hard liqueurs via the still.

If you are a spirit drinker in this day and age, a still is an imperative, especially if you're on a fixed income, and are now one of the hoards of boomers that are experiencing the pleasure of GST on everything you might enjoy.

Buy or construct a still, spend a few bucks and win hearts and join the realm



of the alchemists of high-kicking fun.

You may be now able to afford those other insanities that warm the cockles of your desire and empty that bucket list.

Sugar, water and yeast, and a fermenter, and you will be on a saving grace. The economics are superb. With a gorgeous botanical gin for \$5-6 bucks a bottle, you will now see what the GST wet-tax adds up to.

Clean too. You do it! You control the clean inputs.

Gran will appreciate the heart-starter with eggs, "Keeps the tubes clear."

Sensible imbibing is still one of humanity's best antidotes to the gormless pressures of the for-profit society.

Most Nonas in dear Italy take the morning Grappa. In France, a Cognac or an Armagnac puts fire back into the weary legs – dancing next?

In fabulous Russia, Vodka greets the day, and Gin or Whiskey warms the bones of Scot/Anglo/Dutch morning-souls. And so forth.

So through stills and alchemy, we go to save our souls and sanity... and bless again dear Gaia, ingredient provider of all that is earthly and worthwhile.

Declaration of interest: being a life-long socialist I do not ask for or get any commission or reward or so forth on matters I write of.

However, the TURBO 500 Distillation System is all you will ever want. There are so many things that you can do with this magic machine.

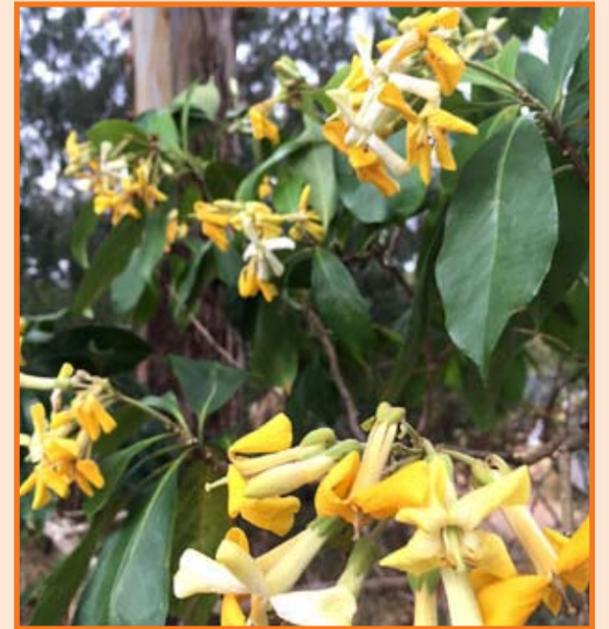
A grand lass with a brewer-shop opposite Lismore Aldi has all the stuff you will need. I say no more.

Let those small things make your life eminently joyful! Stop and smell the blooms, rain permitting.

Plant of the month

Native Frangipani

Hymenosporum flavum



by Richard Burer

The arrival of the hot nights is greeted by the spring flower of *Hymenosporum flavum*.

Native frangipani is a showy, slender tree to around 20m, but often smaller if it's tucked into a forest understory or a compacted garden.

Cream flowers, later turning yellow are fragrant, which are arranged in a

loose terminal panicle.

A brown capsule is formed with a winged seed available for harvest around Christmas, which is easy to propagate.

Common in all types of rainforest, including open forests, Native frangipani reaches its best development in the open, in rich, moist well-drained soil.

This tree is particularly hardy and does not get browsed by wallabies.

Food matters

by Neil Amor

This month's food mythology is all about bread. Demeter was the goddess of corn, grain, and the harvest. She was the daughter of Cronus and Rhea. It was believed that Demeter made the crops grow each year; thus the first loaf of bread made from the annual harvest was offered to her.

Since bread was one of the first baked foods, many myths and superstitions have arisen over the centuries.

Here are just a few:

- If the dough happens to crack during the shaping of a loaf, or during the baking process, there will be a funeral in the near future;
- Placing the bread into the oven should always be a one-person job, if two people put the bread in the oven together, a fight between them will soon occur;
- If the loaf happens to topple over or goes in the oven upside down, there will soon be a death in the household;
- If some of the loaves are stuck together, pay close attention: four loaves stuck together means two will join in marriage, while five loaves together is significant of a funeral;
- Breaking of a loaf while cutting is a very bad omen, it could bring anything



from arguments amongst family members to death of a family member;

- The bakers dozen, which is 13, was developed on the omen you should bake one extra loaf so the devil can have one.

PAUPERS PASTA (serves 4)

Ingredients

400g spaghetti
80ml olive oil
cup fresh breadcrumbs from stale sourdough bread
1 tsp dried chilli flakes
salt & pepper
6 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 cup chopped flat leaf parsley
grated zest & juice of 1 lemon
fresh grated pecorino cheese, to serve
(optional extras: chopped olives or capers)

Method

Cook spaghetti until al dente. Drain and reserve 1/4 cup of the water.

In a large frying pan, warm olive oil to medium heat and add breadcrumbs, chilli flakes and a sprinkle of salt and sauté for about 5 mins, or until crumbs are golden.

Add garlic and cook another min, toss in the parsley and remove pan from heat, then stir through lemon zest (add olives or capers as well, if using).

Season with pepper and more salt if needed, then remove mixture from pan and set aside in a bowl.

Return frying pan to stove and add the cooked spaghetti, a little more olive oil and the reserved cooking water. Toss well and cook for a further 30 seconds. Stir through lemon juice.

Plate up with the breadcrumb mixture on top and a liberal amount of pecorino, and lemon wedges on the side.

Until next month, eat well.



Costa joins the jam with Gareth, Vaughan and Joan

Garden guru goes to market

by Charlie Serchen and Michelle Agioritis

In September the gardening guru came to Nimbin – well, actually to the Blue Knob Farmers Fibre and Fermenters Market, held in the Blue Knob Hall grounds every Saturday morning.

We had the pleasure of welcoming Costa Georgiadis, presenter of *Gardening Australia*, passionate organic gardener and earth carer. Costa wandered the market site and caught up with his friends at the markets, then gave an interesting presentation to a packed crowd in the Moore workshop space.

The topic of Costa's talk was 'The future of farmers markets' and he shared his experience of farmers markets around the country with us, some getting bigger and bigger, sometimes financially viable and sometimes not.

In reference to the Blue Knob Market, as an example and why he keeps coming back, is the fact that Blue Knob Market looks beyond the business to the social side, where everyone is part of a friendly community, food is fresh

every week, there is no cool room, food is not out of season, the suppliers are local and you can sit at a table with "strangers" and talk.

And while regulatory and compliance challenges increase, Costa firmly believes that where a community has the energy then farmers markets will prevail. Costa particularly noted that those markets with a point of difference will be the ones to stand the test of time – weekly/monthly events, workshops and talks, seed save and swap, repair cafes – and encouraged our community to be a part of the market and share their energy. It was a lively talk with all the trademarks of Costa expressions that promoted laughter from the audience.

It was standing room only, and as usual, Costa was very generous with his time answering questions from the audience and spending time around the market chatting. Thanks Costa for an informative and entertaining talk and Q&A session.

We're not just a market – we're a community.

Lyme Disease: The Australian experience

Lyme Disease in Australia is a horror story of misunderstanding and mismanagement.

In general the medical belief is it doesn't exist in Australia. Therefore people are misdiagnosed, and not given effective treatment in the early stages when it is actually curable. Testing is controversial and often not helpful.

The refusal to use the name "Lyme Disease" in Australia compounds the problem. At best the authorities will consider something called "Lyme-like Illness".

The tragedy is that we know from US evidence that early diagnosis and treatment, soon after the tick bite, can be effective. An antibiotic called doxycycline used for three weeks will often cure it. We don't have evidence yet that herbal antimicrobials can do this as it has not been researched.

Another major problem here is the blood tests to confirm the diagnosis of Lyme (borreliosis, caused by the bacteria borrelia) will not show positive for a few weeks, so the treatment must be based on the clinical picture. So in Australia, where doctors don't believe Lyme disease exists, what are the chances of early effective treatment being offered?

Early symptoms of 'Acute Lyme' include flu-like illness,

headache, fever, sore throat, swollen glands, aching joints and muscles, heart palpitations and anxiety. In up to 30% of cases a characteristic 'bull's eye' rash will occur. This rash is very diagnostic of Lyme. 'Chronic Lyme' can develop over months or years (sometimes decades). Many systems can be affected, particularly the joints, the brain and nervous system, the heart and the skin.

Lyme Disease is often called the great imitator. Common misdiagnoses include fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, lupus and Parkinson's Disease as the symptoms can match any of these illnesses. That is not to suggest these diseases themselves are caused by Lyme Disease, but that the symptoms of Lyme can mimic these conditions. Obtaining a diagnosis of Lyme at this late stage is very difficult.

Information submitted to the Senate Enquiry last year showed that one third of sufferers had seen 10 or more medical professionals before being diagnosed with Lyme. Only a handful of GPs in Australia will treat Lyme Disease, and they have been ostracised and shunned by the medical profession. Some are no longer allowed to prescribe the antibiotic regimes they

believe are necessary. It is very costly to see these GPs as they have to pay a small fortune in professional indemnity insurance. If medical treatment is given, it can consist of months or years of antibiotics, with three different classes of antibiotics used. Symptoms often recur after treatment, which is then labelled Post-Lyme Syndrome.

To further complicate things, Borrelia rarely exists as the sole tick-borne illness in a sufferer. Other microbes commonly associated with Lyme include bartonella and babesia, and less commonly rickettsia. Other opportunistic viruses, fungal infections and parasites can run wild because of the overall immune system suppression caused by the disease (and possibly exacerbated by prolonged antibiotic treatment). Genetic susceptibility and exposure to environmental mould can be a big factor in some patients.

From a naturopathic point of view, all of these issues need to be addressed for a successful treatment. It is complex, takes a long time and a lot of herbal medicines and supplements. I find Lyme patients need a lot of emotional as well as herbal support. They have usually done the rounds of doctors, not been adequately diagnosed or believed, have spent a lot of money



Nature's pharmacy
by Trish Clough, herbalist

on testing and still have no answers. Anxiety is a symptom of Lyme as well as a natural reaction to the stress of being unwell and having very few answers.

People do improve with appropriate treatment. My own experience and that of many others using herbal protocols demonstrate there is hope. I treat patients who have had antibiotic treatment, and patients who prefer not to. In my next column I will describe the approach I take with treating people with suspected or confirmed Lyme Disease.

Trish Clough is a herbalist with 30 years experience. She now conducts her own clinic in Lismore and is available for consultations by appointment on 0452-219-502 or email: trishclough@internode.net.au
The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.

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Natural remedies for Lyme Disease

by Robin Stein

It took the diagnosis of Lyme in my partner two months ago to inspire some fairly extensive research into how best to help him to recover.

Lyme disease is caused by the bacteria called borellia, and by the name leptospirosis in some countries. The first thing we organised for him were three intravenous vitamin C infusions of 60 grams each over five days. One every second day. They made an enormous difference to him and he brightened considerably.

They were organised at the Stuart Street medical practice in Mullumbimby. The doctor diagnosed the Lyme in an instant and told us that if he sent Allan's blood to Germany, he would get a positive diagnosis. But it would receive a 'negative' diagnosis in Australia because the government refuses to recognise it. Most of our smaller wildlife, such as echidnas and bilbies carry the borellia pathogens. If doctors can't diagnose it, they will fail to treat it properly which could prove fatal.

At the same time, I took some blood from him, and made a homeopathic remedy from his blood. He has been taking two drops of this remedy, four times daily. Various remedies have assisted him at times, and I'm more than happy to let anybody know what remedies I used if you contact me. However, as borellia can appear in at least 65 forms, there is no determining how it will affect any individual. But I do have an idea.



Borellia is a form of leptospirosis, genus *Lepto Spira*. Thousands of Cubans died from it yearly. No vaccinations were working, and deaths from infection were rising. So they made a homeopathic remedy from the body fluid of infected people, then vaccinated millions of people with it the following year. That year the amount of infections fell off the scale.

Borellia is also closely related to syphilis and this is where I recognised many clues. Homeopaths believe syphilis is passed on through the genes of many generations. It can reappear in many ways in the body. This is called a miasm and fortunately, we know how to treat miasms. Many of us have had an ancestor who contracted syphilis when it was spreading so widely. This is what gave me the clues about why it hits people in different areas. If syphilis has affected us, then we are weakened in that area, be it our skin, lungs, bones, heart, sight, hearing etc.

The Lyme took hold very quickly following the bite from a tiny spider, and a classic 'bull's eye' appeared at

the bite site. It had a necrotic centre 2cms wide and was surrounded by a burning hot, bright red doughnut shaped ring that spread out to a circle 20cms in diameter. At the same time, he developed a rash over his entire body that was so intensely itchy, he was ripping his skin to shreds. He was feverish, with all the symptoms of flu.

Gumbi Gumbi cream, made locally by an Original woman is working brilliantly to reduce the itch. We thank you.

We are incredibly grateful to Narelle Carlyle for suggesting stevia tincture, that has been proven to 'kill' Lyme, and to her partner Chris Harris for making the tincture up for us with Smilax root to assist many other symptoms now as the bacteria die off. Thankfully, we are already seeing results. Look up *Stevia kills Lyme Disease pathogen better than antibiotics* (preclinical study) by Sayer Ji, founder of GreenMedInfo.

Then we had a call from a friend who'd killed his own Lyme with the salt and lemon protocol called MMS. Put ordinary sodium chloride into a container and dissolve it with 24 drops of pure water. Add 24 drops of lemon juice, then 240mls of pure water. Take 30mls hourly for eight hours daily until great improvement. It worked successfully for my friend who has recovered completely.

Make no mistake. Lyme is very serious. But it can be cured in natural ways. We now have choice, and it should be widely known. Happy healing.

robinstein@gmail.com

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Thickhead

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

It's one of those pesky herbaceous plants that come up everywhere. You will find it growing in the lawn and in the paddocks. It appears in garden beds and around the fruit trees, along roadsides and other disturbed areas. Lucky it is a weed that you can eat. If you're on a tight budget, forget paying \$3 a bunch for leafy greens and forage instead for thickhead, *Crassocephalum crepidioides*. (Warning: keep away from roadsides, parking lots and other places which may have been sprayed)

Crassocephalum crepidioides loosely translates from the Latin as 'thick head'. AKA Okinawa spinach, ebola or red-flower ragleaf, this annual plant originates from Africa and Madagascar. It is cultivated widely throughout the tropics. Introduced to Asia, Pacific Islands and the Americas, it is sold in bunches at local markets. The leaves and stems are mucilaginous and popular in

soups and sauces in Central and West Africa.

Care should be taken if consuming large amounts of thickhead. Some sources cite the presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids which can be toxic. Other references indicate a large genetic variation in plant composition and that little or no selective breeding has been carried out on this species. The flavour is said to be 'sharp' but not bitter.

Thickhead also has extensive therapeutic qualities. In Africa it is traditionally used for digestion issues as well as headaches, wounds and sleeping sickness. Its sap, mixed with that of another species, is also used to treat epilepsy. (NB: not intended as medical advice – see your health care practitioner)

Escaping from cultivation, thickhead has naturalised along the east coast of Australia, north from Sydney. It grows up to a metre high with a straggling habit. The stems are soft and ribbed, hairy at the top but bare down below. Thickhead can grow fast reaching



maturity in six to seven weeks.

Red-flower ragleaf describes itself quite well with this common name. The leaf margins are coarsely toothed giving a ragged appearance and the flat topped flower clusters are a rusty pinky orange. The young flowers droop before standing upright on maturity. Seed is produced with fine silky hairs. They blow easily around in the wind, ensuring its spread and survival of the species. The hairs are hooked enabling them to also stick to clothing and animal fur and be transported that way. Water can also carry seed overland and down creeks and rivers.

If removal is required (there is only so much thickhead

you can eat) these herbs hand pull fairly easily but don't leave the plants laying on the ground as they will put down roots from the stem and just keep growing. That is, if we get some rain. Get them before they flower and set seed and numbers will be reduced.

Regular patrols of your property will identify any new weeds as they appear and allow appropriate management before they become a problem. After rain look for seedlings of giant devil fig and groundsel and dig them up while they are small.

Happy weeding

PS: Next time you are trading insults, confound with a creative name and call them a *crassocephalum*.

Disadvantages of monocultural agriculture

by Geoff Dawe

The necessity of humans to move toward sustainability by diversifying food and fibre supply is a major departure from the Neolithic Revolution of approximately 10,000-15,000 years ago.

The Neolithic revolution was the beginning of the tendency toward monocultural, or limited species, farming and grazing.

Major consequences of the revolution were that food was more readily available and in larger quantities than that provided by hunter/gathering. This enabled the development of a stratified or socially hierarchical society where a farming class evolved.

It relieved many people of the need to be directly involved in finding the basic necessities of life; they could be involved in other activities. Thus began the development of a technocracy.

Accompanying the Neolithic Revolution were three major negative effects that still apply in our time: food, although plentiful when it was available, was of poorer quality because it was less diverse. A second effect was that monocultural farming and grazing spawned habitat loss since more and more land was required for agriculture as population grew.

A third effect was that food deteriorated in quality as soils became exhausted. Another deterioration in food was that it was primarily bred for the way it looked and keeping qualities. Nutrient content declined as nutrition was not readily noticeable in the appearance of food.

Industrialised agriculture was also a case of putting "all one's eggs into one basket" that opened it up to disaster if there were crop failures. Paul Roberts in his book *The End of Food* reports France was subject to 26 major famines between 1600 and 1800. Florence



could not sufficiently feed its people approximately every fourth year, nearly a third of a Finland's population starved to death in 1696 and famines in the 1500's killed millions in India and China.

Paul, in a particularly poignant vignette summarises where civilisation took humans in regard to food: "As Britain geared up to fight the second Boer rebellion, it was discovered that one third of the army recruits were too weak to endure basic training and too short for the army's minimum requirement of five foot."

"After 12,000 years of civilisation and progress, this is what humanity had come to: stunted bodies, shorter lives, and, at some point mass extinction by famine."

The physical stunting could be compared to the measurements taken in Australia of Yarraginy, a chief man of the Wollondilly tribe in 1848. John Meredith, in *The Last Kooradgie*, records that Dr. Waugh, who took the measurements, expressed the opinion that "such a perfectly formed man would scarcely be found in the British army."

Similarly, the 1993 *Newcastle Herald*

Supplement reports a European observer at the time of early settlement of the Coal River area (present day Newcastle) noting that Indigenous were "...in general taller than the Europeans. You seldom see a black under five feet eight or nine inches. I have seen them about six feet four in height."

For our own culture, the technocracy finally arrived at a partial recovery for a small sector of humanity, for a small period of time, of a more human diet that began to be lost after the beginnings of civilisation. Nevertheless, this could only be "recovered" with loss of habitat, loss of topsoil, reduced soil organic matter, salination, etc. that were more likely to effect the health of future, rather than present generations.

In other words, what we are experiencing now is partial sufficient supply of food in the short-term for a limited population, but it only now occurs with industrial agriculture continually threatening the long-term.

Sustainability that acknowledges the long-term, is involved in polycultural or diverse-grown food supply. This introduces major societal change that is potentially not popular because it is uncustomary.

The tree in the tennis court

There are trees growing up through the tennis courts.

These are of a species aptly named for the way in which its leafless, jointed cladodes resemble horse's tails. The weight and texture of the waxy, coarse articles remind me of the sting of my mare's tail as a child, if she made a sudden impatient flick at flies, and I was too slow to get out of the way.

It's a common species here on the Eastern seaboard, and in this case clearly the rightful occupant, but it's not meant to be here, pushing up through the thin veneer of a tennis court next to an empty resort on the edge of the water.

There was once a kind of misguided splendour here. Families took modest holidays by the sea, the children playing putt-putt golf and pouring extra orange juice at the free breakfast bar, the parents surveying with a satisfied swagger what their scrimping and scraping off fortnightly pay-checks had afforded them. For a generation or two, we lazed languidly along the rendered



by Anastasia Guise

brick corridors and waddled by the kidney-shaped pebble pool: ordinary people satisfied with our access to holidays just like the rich and famous, only without the helicopters and caviar.

For a moment I'm inexplicably embarrassed for them. I'm embarrassed for the empty restaurant and the overgrown tennis court even while I am righteously indignant about the theft of land and desecration of coastline. I'm embarrassed this place was ever built at all. But that it was built, and then abandoned by fickle

economics, is perhaps the greatest insult in this. We might call it a recession, or a post-GFC slump, but everywhere there are signs that we are on the other side of the slippery slope. We climbed to the top, and planted a flag there, and the ride down the other side is not mapped or named. As I wander amongst these saplings, I wonder if anybody else feels as if we are wandering through the ruins of our own excess. The question is, what do we take with us, and did we learn a bloody thing?

Whoever bulldozed this coastal habitat, and built a tennis court and a resort here, was focused on short-term economic gain, just as governments, manacled by media culture, continue to be focused on short-term electoral cycles and pop politics. It's a fatal flaw which may well have plagued us from Mesopotamia to Easter Island and everywhere in between. What do we value, but more importantly, how do we frame our values within a time-scale greater than ourselves?

As we perch on the current cusp of climate catastrophe, many Indigenous leaders are emerging as steady and powerful voices in a time of great uncertainty and potential panic. They hold stories passed down by their ancestors over generations about climatic change and sea level rises, including those about sites of importance which now lie under kilometres of ocean. This knowledge does not seek to suggest that climate change is not real, or devastating, but points out that a considered view of the planet – and our place here – is put into sobering perspective by its contextualisation within the vast scale of geological time.

These Casuarina saplings are a blip on the radar, really. As is the swimming pool, the tennis court, and any recent City we've built. Whether an enormous global population can successfully navigate towards a sustainable future-in-perpetuity is anyone since the Stone Age's guess. An immediate consideration, as our focus turns back towards survival, perhaps, rather than enjoying the



Photo: Fermin Leal

spoils we gleefully ruined the planet for, is how are we to repurpose all of our crumbling infrastructure, for the long term? How can we consolidate on our already-extracted resources, and already-built infrastructure, for better environmental and social outcomes? Instead of carving new car-dependant suburbs out of native bushland, we need to be throwing the doors open on negatively-g geared investment properties and letting people live there. We need to focus on places being liveable, not visitable.

I can imagine another future for this place by the sea. It might become an eco-village. After all, it's here already, and all the effort

invested in its bricks and mortar is a kind of embodied energy. The density of its structures is a potential pathway to energy efficiency and community living, with provision for a community garden, and a little school. It's proximity to the ocean may lend itself to small-scale desalination in the event of water crises.

More likely it will be re-captured first by the Casuarinas, and then by the sea.

Justice, perhaps? Or maybe just some future human's ancient history.

Anastasia is an author and environmentalist, writing on ecology, science and humanity. Facebook: anastasiaguiseauthor

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

Towards the end of last year the first comprehensive survey was undertaken of NSW's 4,600 voluntary wildlife carers. The survey was well promoted through the NSW Wildlife Council and WIRES resulting in over 960 responses, about 21%. The survey's purpose was to get a handle on how the sector operates and to solicit carers' views on what works well and what could be done better.

Why the sudden interest? The short answer is the change program initiated by the Independent Biodiversity Review Panel's Report and now adopted in the new biodiversity legislation. To wit, Government facilitates more effective wildlife care through strategic partnerships with wildlife rehabilitation providers (this could extend to accrediting peak bodies or representative organisations, rather than licensing individual wildlife care providers); Government provides consistent, state-wide standards for operation; and Providers deliver service, manage their members and report. Having adopted the accreditation concept, it's now up to the National Parks & Wildlife Service and the sector to co-design a system and make it work.

In addition to the carer survey a fair bit of evidence-gathering has been taking place over the past year, including facilities audits, discussions with group executives and other targeted surveys. A discussion paper, Review of the NSW Voluntary Fauna Rehabilitation Sector, which will include recommendations is expected to be released on public

exhibition towards the end of the month. The new accreditation system will be introduced during the latter part of 2018.

A few facts and figures about wildlife rehabilitation and rehabilitators have been fed back to the sector. First, the State's 4,600 wildlife carers are dispersed among 30 licensed groups including WIRES and its 27 branches and a handful of independent licence-holders. Five groups operate in the Northern Rivers: Australian Seabird Rescue, Friends of the Koala, Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers and WIRES Northern Rivers. There may also be one or two licensed individuals.

The sector is overwhelmingly driven by helping native animals (91%) and conserving the environment (57%). Most wildlife carers are women over 50 who own their own home and have incomes of less than \$50,000 p.a. An average of 885 hours per person (126 working days) is spent on fauna rehabilitation p.a. worth in excess of \$10m p.a. when extrapolated across 4,600 carers. This doesn't include capital investment in facilities or out-of-pocket expenses. The survey also demonstrated that wildlife carers do much more than deliver front-line services to sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Well, yes – environmental education, data collection (and sharing), habitat restoration, citizen science, head-starting species recovery, advocating for policy reform, environmental watch-dog, research assistance - to name a bit of it. Neither the extent of the work nor its value is well understood by Government and the community.

Certainly the Chief Scientist & Engineer in her Report of the Independent Review into the Decline of Koala Populations in Key Areas of NSW (2016) was careful to acknowledge the 'critical front-line role' of fauna rehabilitation groups in assisting the recovery of individual koalas and the importance of improving support.

She also mentioned their koala protection awareness-building campaigns. Encouraging signs perhaps, that the penny is starting to drop.

You might have heard that Friends of the Koala's Burrubi Education and Administration Centre was officially opened last month, less than twelve months since the Federal Government announced its contribution of \$78,028 from the National Stronger Regions Fund to the \$170,000 project.

To have won the grant was a feat in itself – just 67 successful applications from across the country, Friends of the Koala is the only project that could be described as environmental – a real credit to our grant-writers.

The opening was the realisation of part of a long-held aspiration for 'a larger and better equipped' Koala Care and Research Centre on the group's 1.27 hectare site in East Lismore. Consultations with members and stakeholders had been held as early as 2008. A building appeal was launched at the 2009 AGM but a couple of early applications were unsuccessful, FOK's work continued to expand and koala veterinary expertise was developing locally and at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

Friends of the Koala's 30th



Koala Care Co-ordinator, Susannah Keogh cuts the ribbon of the Burrubi Education & Administration Centre with FOK President Ros Irwin and Member for Page, Kevin Hogan

birthday in 2016 had been a strong driver for effort renewal, and a small project team under the leadership of then vice, and now president, Ros Irwin put their minds and energy to the task. Having raised the funds, the build and preparing people for change became a huge undertaking.

The new centre provides much needed education space, improved

volunteer amenities, garaging for FOK's two vehicles, visitor reception and an administration area, leaving the original mid-90s building, which will require some remodelling, to be entirely focussed on koala rehabilitation and research.

None too soon, as koala admissions from across the region continue to escalate.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting
(02) 6622-1233

For information about koalas and conservation, or to book a tour, please visit

www.friendsofthekoala.org

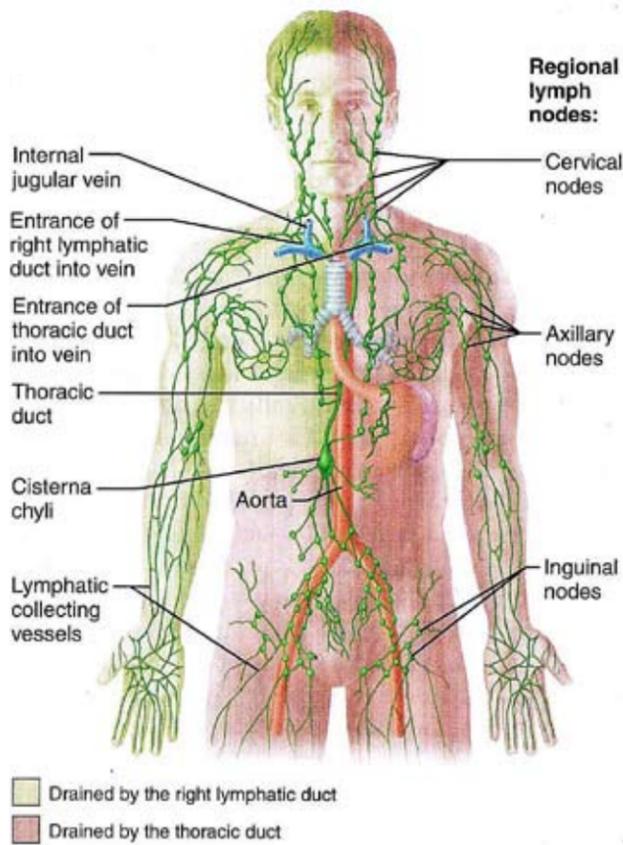
or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org

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

Yoga and your lymphatic system

by Cameron Storey



General distribution of lymphatic collecting vessels and regional lymph nodes.

Picture courtesy 'Human Anatomy & Physiology' by Marieb and Hoehn

Our human body displays an intelligent design and one of the eleven major components that make up the human body is the lymphatic system.

The lymphatic system consists of three major parts: 1) A web of lymphatic vessels, 2) Lymphatic fluid that runs through the vessels and 3) hundreds of lymph nodes that cleanse the lymph as it filters through them. There are clusters of nodes at the groin, armpits and in the neck.

The lymph nodes, along with the spleen, thymus gland, appendix, tonsils and Peyer's patches (in the small intestine) make up the lymphoid organs. The Peyer's patches and the appendix are in a strategic position to destroy bacteria before the pathogens can breach the intestinal wall.

The lymphatic system and the lymphoid organs and tissues provide the structural basis of our immune system and help to maintain the

health and purity of the blood. All living body cells are bathed in lymph.

The lymphatic vessels form a one-way system in which the lymphatic fluid flows only towards the heart. This system begins with lymphatic capillaries, then lymph collecting vessels with one way valves, then through series of lymph nodes and trunks and finally empties into either the right lymphatic duct or the left thoracic ducts near the heart. The lymph then travels back into venous circulation.

The lymph is circulated by four main factors: 1) The muscular system by the alternate contraction and relaxation actions of the skeletal muscles, 2) The respiratory system by the pressure changes in the thorax when breathing, 3) The contraction of the lymphatic trunks and thoracic duct and 4) one-way valves in the lymphatic vessels.

Even so, the flow of lymph into the blood stream is slow

and sporadic at about three litres each day. This is why an exercises like yoga and pranyama is highly beneficial for circulating lymph.

The lymphatic vessels: 1) return excess tissues fluid back to the bloodstream, 2) carry absorbed fat from the intestine to the blood and 3) return leaked proteins to the blood, and 4) carry hormonal secretions.

The tonsils: palatine, lingual and pharyngeal form a lymphatic ring around the entrance of the pharynx (throat). These tonsils gather and remove many of the pathogens entering the pharynx or in inhaled air. The once-popular removal of tonsils has slowed considerably over time, speculating whether the medical system may be evaluating such a radical step when alternative approaches may lead to better long-term outcomes.

Some yoga poses that facilitate a healthy spleen and lymphatic system include but are not limited to: Sun salutes, downward dog pose,

upward dog pose, headstand and cycle, shoulderstand and cycle, peacock pose, locust pose, bow pose, lotus, agni kriya, and nauli kriya.

Ways to assist your lymphatic system include: 1) anti-inflammatory diet and healing herbs, 2) drink fresh pure water, 3) wear loose comfortable clothing, 4) exercise, perspire and breathe deeply (yoga/walking/pranayama, etc), 5) relaxation (savasana), sunshine and 6) massage.

Fear can often prevent people from starting yoga because they think they are too weak, or too inflexible to start a practice. Yoga is first and foremost is about transformation and if you can get to the mat and practise you can transform.

The Dharma Centre on Lillifield Community has four yoga classes a week. Closed during NSW school holidays. Call 02 6689-7120 or check out our Facebook page Dharma Centre – Lillifield for more details and directions.

Resolving emotions in old age Validation Part I

by Betti Wille

I am experiencing and processing life by way of using a sensitive nervous system within a feeling body.

Being born into the current era has its own peculiarities. Human life seems to be a lot about running towards the 'good' feelings and escaping the 'bad' ones. And truly, why wouldn't I make this choice when it presents to me? My basic nervous system doesn't know about distractions, fake gratifications or sensory overload. It simply distinguishes between safety and danger. Consumerism has replaced cultural guidance. It's easy to get lost.

Emotional dilemmas also impact on our sense of orientation. Emotions manifest within the body and especially traumatic experiences will always try to find resolution. An intelligent move of Mother Nature, but unpleasant to feel and so we usually push it away. And we can, distractions of all sorts and a variety of drugs are easily available (and sometimes necessary to protect our sanity).

So we push it away and get on with things. Looking towards old age, there might be some unexpected outcomes though. What if nothing's left to get on with?

Naomi Feil, one of the most sought after trainers in the field of dementia care world-wide, has observed a selective resolution phase towards people's end of life.

Her method, called validation, helps disoriented old people and their caregivers to communicate in a meaningful way, even when spoken language is not an option anymore.

Honesty is an integral part of

the validation toolbox and so is the acknowledgement that any behaviour, how odd or difficult it may be, has a valid reason behind it.

Find more details about validation techniques in part two of this article in next month's *GoodTimes*. For now, I'd like to introduce two underlying theoretic assumptions and how they may play up in someone's life.

They are "repressed emotions grow in intensity" (Carl Jung) and "an unfinished life task demands to be heard at a later stage" (Erik Erikson).

The following summary of life tasks as identified by Erikson is not quite complete, but serves the purpose:

- In infancy, the life task is to learn and trust that I am cared for and utterly lovable.
- Early childhood teaches me to take control (i.e. body functions)
- Adolescence comes with the task to cut the cord. I rebel and fight for my own identity.
- The responsibility in adulthood is to master intimacy, getting and staying close with others.
- In middle age I face an accumulation of losses (i.e. familiar roles, body images). The task here is to roll with the punches.
- In old age, I sort out what I was. I prepare to die with self-respect, despite my failures, mistakes and unfulfilled dreams. I like myself. I have integrity. Pause. Feel.

Let's remember to be kind to ourselves. No-one is to blame. There's either no guidance or too many choices altogether.

Reaching very old age, aggravated by loss of social roles and physical bodily functions, the control



mechanisms that had 'protected' me from facing unpleasant emotions crumble and disintegrate. Given that repressed emotions grow in intensity, I may find myself resting on a volcano.

And when I enter old age with a backpack full of unresolved business, life will demand resolution. Naomi was the first to describe the progressive resolution phase that some people enter at the end of life. Unless a person finds integrity, resolution comes in four stages: mal-orientation, time confusion, repetitive movement and vegetation.

Validation has been practised worldwide for decades now. It is not a magic bullet or cure for Alzheimer's but has been found to prevent the vegetation state and improve the wellbeing of all people involved in the care of disoriented old people. Also, it can teach us how to age successfully.

Naomi Feil's inspiring Ted talk is available on YouTube. For further information, visit: www.vfvalidation.org

There is currently no authorised Validation Training Institute in Australia. Still, if we can gather 20 committed people, we could organise a course. Spread the word and get in touch if interested: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com or 0490-292-138.

Putting it to the test

by David Ward

Having spent the last 11 years in total self-sufficiency, not requiring any form of non-nutritional substance, I have to admit to having experienced a growing sense of curiosity.

I'm not talking about cravings, just wondering about what might happen if I was to drink some alcohol, or directly inhale some cannabis smoke. Would I instantly return to my long-term compulsive behaviour, or would I get to keep the ground I'd made over the last 11 years? There was really only one way to find out.

As my inquisitiveness mounted and my 60th birthday drew closer, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to conduct an experiment. I was aware of a potential element of risk here, that I could lose the status I'd achieved over the last 11 years, that my psychological self-sufficiency could be under threat.

I was about to challenge the greatest myth that surrounds the world of addiction: "Once an addict always an addict." I was also about to put that magical support of my yoga practice to the ultimate test.

Despite this apprehension, I felt confident that I could retain my composure and stay in control. A couple of old friends were assuring me that I would be fine and that I should just do it. I took my time selecting a bottle of wine that would be worthy of the occasion and got together with my chosen company at a favourite location. I pulled the cork – it tasted exceptional.

I puffed on the finest resin through a solid gold kiseru, taking a single inhalation. Again the



taste was exceptional and the smoke so cool I was unaware of its presence until I exhaled. The dosage was perfect, pure pleasure without the slightest disturbance of thought or emotion.

This was sustainable smoking, perfectly satisfying, more than a month later I still haven't felt the need to re-indulge. Once again my yoga practice has come through, proving itself to be the miracle that it is.

It goes without saying that I've never given tobacco a second thought. Being in a category all of its own, the extremely powerful but brief duration of its impact suggests one thing, a follow-up dose, just in case you missed it the first time.

Interestingly, when it comes to having a taste of coffee, I find myself more hesitant than with either cannabis or alcohol. I'll save that re-acquaintance for another time.

After an 11-year uninterrupted break, I didn't undertake this step lightly, and I wouldn't recommend trying it at home without the presence of an established daily yoga practice or some other comparable alternative.

The Vital Choices Program offers proven strategies to end all addictions. Phone David on 0447-820-510.

The effects of seasonal change after a drought

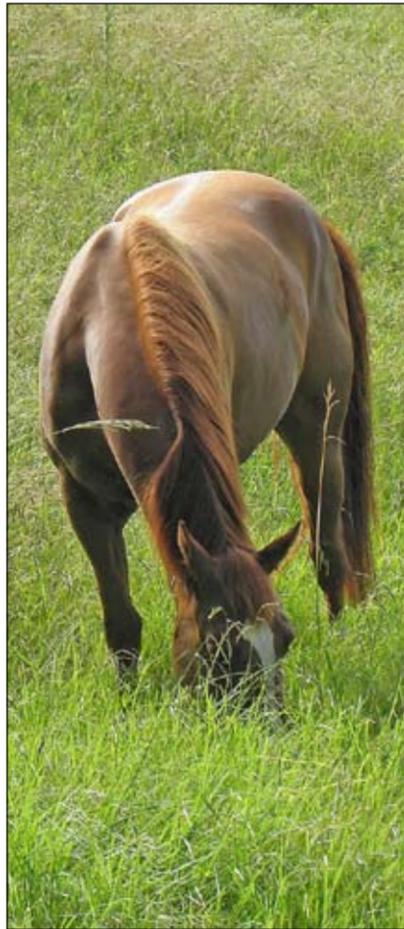
by Les Rees, Equine Naturopath

As I write, it's been a long time since we had any rain in the Northern Rivers and the land has dried out massively, causing trees and shrubs to flower earlier than normal in a last-ditch attempt to create seed for the rainy season to nourish them.

Most people I talk to are looking forward to the long-awaited rain to arrive to activate the renewal of the lifecycle and invigorate our senses and awareness of the wonders within the natural world. However, as with all things this can have as many negatives as positives for our horses.

Having sensitive digestive function, equines are susceptible to developing a range of problems when they have access to rich grasses during high growth periods, especially after having a diet of dried grasses during a drought. Grass reacts very quickly to rain taking advantage of the wet conditions using photosynthesis to convert sunlight into sugars from carbon dioxide in the form of non-structural carbohydrates (NSCs) needed to promote a new growth of rich green shoots. The problem for horses is that their digestive system can't cope with the high levels of NSCs, and like us they are attracted to rich foods which can cause life-threatening conditions.

When equines gorge themselves on the lush grass, enzymes in the digestive tract convert starch and sugars into simple sugars to enable the body to absorb them. This causes a surge in blood glucose which initiates the release of insulin into the bloodstream enabling the uptake of glucose into the tissues. Problems occur when fluctuations of glucose and subsequent insulin concentrations overload the balance of the system making it less sensitive



resulting in an over-supply of insulin to control the blood glucose levels, and this can be a contributor to insulin resistance.

Furthermore, research has shown that elevated glucose levels can trigger laminitic conditions. Laminitis is an extremely painful condition of the feet where the laminae surrounding the pedal bone in the hoof becomes so weakened that they can no longer hold it in place. In advanced cases the bone rotates causing even more painful

pressure within the hoof. Due to the long and painful recovery period, horses are often put down at this stage, so it pays to be aware of the possibilities before it becomes too bad to deal with!

Grasses can also contain high levels of fructose molecules known as fructans which are a non-structural carbohydrate and un-digestible. In order for the horse to absorb them, they have to be fermented by microbial activity in the large intestine and in large quantities can cause a similar response to an overload of NSCs as it also initiates increased insulin levels and therefore another contributor to insulin resistance and possible laminitic activity.

After long periods of drought, a sudden flush of new grass can also cause colic. Horses have highly sensitive digestive systems and fructans are not good for the bacteria in the gut. High fructan levels kill the good bacteria and cause acidity levels to rise and the subsequent release of harmful pathogens resulting in colic.

I often wonder how horses have managed to survive in domesticity when I consider the factors involved in keeping them in good condition, given their sensitivity to lush grass and a myriad of other possibilities that can affect their health and wellbeing. We all need to be aware of the consequences of allowing our horses to eat the lush grass that will start to spring any time now.

If in doubt, restrict grazing time and assess their diet. There are herbs that can be very helpful for horses. Used as preventatives they can be very useful in protecting them from seasonal disorders as well as being very powerful to promote healing.

info@horsetailherbs.com.au
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Training/De-training

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

Everything we do with our horses is training them or de-training them.

We call it training when the horse ends up doing something 'better' than they had previously, and we call it de-training when they end up doing it 'worse'. Horses don't know the difference between training sessions and just hanging out. Everything we do when we are around a horse will affect its behaviour in the future, for better or for worse. This is a very important point.

When people buy a new horse it has often been trained by a professional or an experienced horse person. It is quiet and easy to handle and knows what to do when asked. Around two months later, I get a phone call. The beautifully behaved horse has changed and the situation is deteriorating rapidly. This is extremely common. Younger horses de-train faster than older horses, which is why for beginners I always recommend getting an older horse. 'Young humans with old horses and old humans with young horses' is the saying but you can put the words inexperienced/experienced in there too.

Here are a few examples. A common one is picking up the hooves. Initially the horse picks up its feet beautifully. One day it pulls when the human is holding the hoof and the human lets go respectfully. The horse can stand with all feet on the ground, which it prefers. The next time the horse does it again and it works! The human lets go. This situation deteriorates until the horse refuses to pick up any feet for cleaning and/or pulls them out of the person's hands. This is de-training. In this situation the human needed to hold onto the foot until the horse stopped moving, and then to put it down.

Another one is when the horse becomes aggressive while being groomed. It usually starts the same way. One day the horse moves when being groomed. The human stops grooming. The horse puts their ears back and moves and the human stops again. Very quickly anytime someone goes to groom the horse all hell breaks loose.

The way to re-train this is exactly the same. Put your hand or brush on the horse and keep it there until all the moving and narky behaviour stops, even if only for 1



Suzy and Soray

second, then remove your hand. Repeat this as many times as necessary, removing your hand every time the horse is still. In this way you are rewarding the standing quietly, not the moving or aggressive behaviour. Not doing something is a reward for your horse.

In both these scenarios it's important to be aware of your physical safety. If you are unable to do this safely, call in a professional horse trainer or experienced horse person. While re-training it's important to be very calm and have lots of patience. There's an old rule of thumb that if a horse does something three times it has learnt it. I have found this to be true. If I am working with a horse/human combination and I see the human do de-training twice with the same thing, I usually ask if I can step in and re-train then ask them to try again.

Sometimes de-training situations can result in very dangerous behaviours in horses. It's important to get professional help before things deteriorate too far. One inexperienced rider I knew had purchased the perfect horse and in a few months this same horse was chasing them out of the paddock with its teeth bared. This type of situation starts out with the smallest little mistakes and escalates.

Being aware that everything you do influences your horse, and rewarding only the behaviours you desire can ensure that de-training doesn't happen. Good luck and feel free to contact me with any queries you may have.

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