

PAINTING & DRAWING ART CLASSES

for beginners and advanced students, offered weekly on Wednesdays 5-7pm and Fridays 10.30am -12.30pm



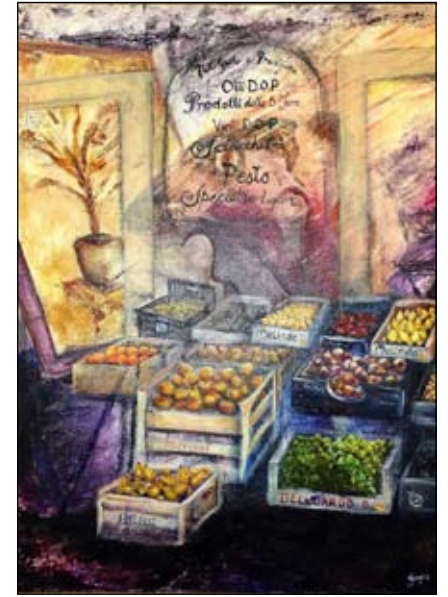
The Creative Sanctuary Nimbin

For info, call Oceanna Phoenix Brown 0403-710-327 or email: thecreativesanctuarynimbin@gmail.com
www.thecreativesanctuary.net.au

Artist of the Month: Jenni Rogers



Bagels (left) Pastries (above) Prodotti (right)



by Tonia Haynes

One might be forgiven for feeling disapproval at someone throwing food at a well-known oil painting – no matter how important the reason.

After all, the attacker is blatantly exposing their lack of knowledge of fine food and fine art. Both of which involve particular skills and much thought in the creating.

Similar to making an art piece where one requires deep knowledge of the mediums they are using, while biting back expletives at the outrageous cost of the equipment they need, in order to create what they consider is a thing of beauty, creating fine food is a similar task.

One needs to know how ingredients match, how much to use of each and how easy it is to make a mistake that

could be fatal for the end result.

Sadly, both the artist and the chef well know that their enormous effort may only be appreciated by a few, whilst hoping in their most secret of hearts that they've manifested something which everyone will love.

This artist of the month has faced the anxiety of creating the best she can in both the areas of art and food. And we are proud that she has decided to share her skills in our small and cosy room filled with excellent artistic talent, called the Nimbin Artists Gallery.

We attempt to be open seven days a week. For further information contact NAG: 02-6689-1444, www.nimbinartistgallery.org

Jenni Rogers is an artist, surface designer and chef, who says:

"My paintings usually come from my experiences as a chef.

"Favourite subjects to paint are usually

beautifully presented food, cafes, street scenes and markets. I find all aspects of food, cafes and especially hand written recipes very emotional – when we bake them, in a way, it brings our loved ones back to us.

"I have vivid memories of helping my dad bake bread and also making little sweet mushroom tarts with my grandma, you know the ones with the raspberry jam, vanilla icing and little pastry stalks.

"My style tends to be detailed and colourful; my preferred mediums to paint with are oil, acrylic and water colour. I paint from my art studio at home, which is in the beautiful Northern Rivers."

Vist her website: sweet-artbyjenni.com.au

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The Artist's Choice



Sculptural piece by Narelle Carlyle
At right: 'Storm Warning' by Katherine Castle



Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Cafe will re-open on Thursday 12th January, with a new exhibition, The Artist's Choice.

We ended 2022 with a wonderful performance by Andy Walker and Michael Skinner with the launch of Andy's new album *Calico Moonrise*. It was a treat to have live music back at Blue Knob.

A celebration was also held to say thank you to the volunteers and members on Sunday 18th December, and with a good turnout and some delicious finger food provided by Blue Knob Cafe, we expressed our gratitude to all those who keep the Gallery, Cafe and Ceramic Studio humming along.

The Artist's Choice is an annual exhibition that doesn't have a theme for the artists to work with, but is always a surprise when artwork that comes in often has random, connected elements that run through them.

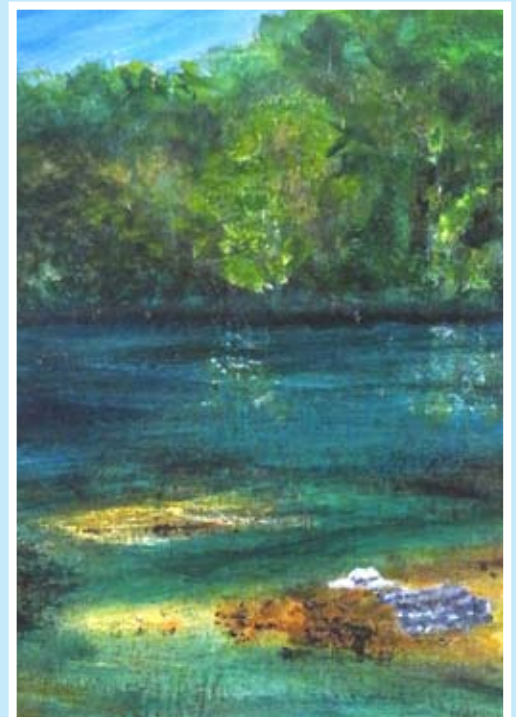
The large mixed media sculptural pieces by Narelle Carlyle make an outstanding impression when you walk into the Gallery; they have a quality of movement and thrusting upwards towards the sky.

The juxtaposition of these pieces alongside Kathryn Castle's beautiful original landscapes of the Caldera can remind us of the formations in the landscape that surrounds us.

Along with Mardi Zylstra's beach and bush water scenes, we can see the dynamics that can happen between paintings and sculptures.

The Artist's Choice exhibition will run through to the first week in February, so there is plenty of time to come and see it and enjoy the view from the cafe veranda.

For more info: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au phone 02-6689-7449 or Blue Knob Gallery, Cafe Facebook page or: www.blueknobgallery.com



'Nimbin Creek – A Quick Dip' by Mardi Zylstra (detail)

Inspired by the natural world



'Deep in the Forest' by Marita Kohl



Banksia serrata

Jennifer Densley

by Ruth Tsimbinis

The Roxy Gallery is seeing the year in with 'Surrounds', an exhibition by three women friends who all find interest in the flora and landscape of the areas that surround them.

Their works engage techniques of painting, printmaking and mixed media with fibre and draw on memories of environments they have experienced in this region and memories of places they have come from.

Stemming from vastly different places, Marita Kohl's childhood was spent in Germany, Fleur Marsden grew up on a farm in Western NSW and Kate Henson was born in California.

These three different experiences

found a common link in this group exhibition through each artist's interest in exploring the creative inspiration from the natural world of this region.

'Surrounds' will be on exhibition at the Roxy Gallery until 29th January.

Steppin Up Gallery

Unfortunately, the lift to the Roxy Gallery has been out of service and this malfunctioning has changed the access to the gallery.

The entrance is now via stairs at the Stratheden street door.

The Steppin Up Gallery is still accessible for people to view the current exhibition of works by Jennifer Densley. 'Artarium' – an artistic collection of Australian Native Plants created as botanical studies.

Jennifer's artist prints use original watercolour, pencil, ink, and photography. Jennifer uses the process of collecting nature plants to create a line drawing in ink and watercolour then incorporates the collected plant into the work.

This composition is then photographed and turned into a print on archival paper, bringing the realism into the imagined.

With a love for her own native garden and the nature of the Australian bush, Jennifer has contemporised the use of the 'Linnaean Style' traditionally used by many botanical illustrators to show all parts of the plant so it can be identified.

'Artarium' will be on show in the Steppin Up Gallery until February.

Serpentine kicks off the year with mud and ink



'The Wings of Kindness' by Penelope Sienna

The Serpentine Community Art Gallery announces a new exhibition 'Mud and Ink' featuring local printmakers impacted by the floods.

The exhibition showcases the works of 15 local printmakers, curated by Steve Giese who himself experienced great loss to his life's work and home this year.

It is a tribute to all the printmakers who lost it all in the floods, except for their determination and talents to get up and start it all over again, exploring the chaos of Mud and Ink.

Print artist Dean L Heaton said, "My studio was flooded and I was unable to print anything until June. Currently I'm working on a series of prints reflecting that time, the situation we were in and how I not necessarily feel but a perception of the situation from an objective point of view."

Penelope Sienna comments, "There are tens of thousands of unresolved flood stories swirling around our region. Some are told loudly calling for action and resolution, while others are shared quietly or not at all. There

are always those who fall through the cracks. "During times of hardship, it is the generosity and kindness of friends and strangers alike that give me the hope and will I need to carry on until things are better. The wings of kindness will carry us through." There will be 15 stories in print form with different experiences, making for varied and fascinating collection.



Untitled by Dean L Heaton

are always those who fall through the cracks. "During times of hardship, it is the generosity and kindness of friends and strangers alike that give me the hope and will I need to carry on until things are better. The wings of kindness will carry us through." There will be 15 stories in print form with different experiences, making for varied and fascinating collection.

At different moments, the exhibition exudes a sense of discovery, contemplation and optimism, engaging viewers in works which express the lives in limbo moving forward once again.

'Mud and Ink' is on exhibition at 104 Conway Street, Lismore from 6pm Friday, 21st January until 6th February.

Contact Serpentine Gallery at: gallery@serpentinearts.org for more information.

DIANBUNG GARDENS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 15 Family Doof Day 10am-6pm, by donation
Jan 21 Garden Tour & Lunch 10.30am, bookings essential
Feb 11-12 Gardening Abundance Weekend Workshop
Mar 4 Open Garden Day
Mar 11 Soap-making & Natural Cleaning Workshop

Open hours: Wed and Sat 10am-3pm
 Other times by appointment: 0429-147-138

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A moment

by S Sorrensen

I like Hobart. It has stone buildings that don't burn and old buildings that don't flood and people I don't know and air so cold it hurts your throat.

I'm in Hobart in a shoe shop. Not just any shoe shop, but a shoe shop for hiking shoes.

When everything you took for granted is changing so quickly and you don't know who you are anymore, you go for a walk, right? In the wilderness.

In the wilderness you can find yourself. (Look at the map: You Are Here.)

Everyone told me I needed a break.

"You're getting weird," they said. "You need a break."

"No I don't," I said, angrily. "Okay, you don't," they said.

"Okay, maybe I do," I said, sobbing.

"Oh God," they said.

Though the salesman, Robin, is smiling at me, I can tell he is sick of me. I've been here for hours. He's suggested another hiking shoe store down the mall. Twice.

You see, I can't work out what I feel anymore.

Does that feel comfortable? Is there enough room for your toes? Enough flex in the



sole?

I don't know.

Who are you?

I don't know!

I started early this morning by trying on a pair of Merrell Moab GTX 3, size 10. That's my size. It's been my size since I was 18. That's who I am: size 10 guy. If it's size 10, it's comfortable.

"Is that comfortable?"

Robin asked.

I bounced on my toes. I kicked my heels. It should've been comfortable. These were 10s. But...

"Bit tight," I said.

So Robin got me a larger size, but they were too narrow. Robin got me another brand which, he said, was a wide fit. They were wide enough, but

not long enough. Then he brought out another pair and another pair and...

It's an existential crisis. I thought I was a 10. I thought I knew what I was. But, apparently, no.

Lunchtime now and I'm sitting in a semicircle of untied shoes and opened boxes and clouds of tissue paper.

Robin is on his phone, probably talking to his therapist or calling in a hitman.

"Robin," I say, voice breaking just a bit. "Bring me the 10s, please. Yes, again."

With his foot, shod in a Salomon X Ultra 4, Robin kicks the pair of Merrell Moab GTX 3, size 10, from the outer circle of

my indecisions over to me. Attitude.

"You started with these," Robin says, 'three hours and 20 minutes ago. And said they were a bit tight."

"I know. But I am a size 10, right? Maybe you made a mistake, mate. Or maybe the factory. Or maybe the war in Ukraine has..."

Robin senses madness. I wipe dribble from my mouth. Robin warily picks up the shoes and hands them to me.

I pull them on. I stand up. I walk around.

Robin questions with an eyebrow.

"A bit tight," I say.

Robin doesn't actually groan, but I hear it anyway.

"I don't understand. I'm a 10!" I say, a tear forming.

"US?"

"Pardon?"

"A US 10?"

"No. Size 10."

"These shoes are US size 10 – which is UK size 9. So, are you UK or US?" Robin asks.

"I don't know. I'm sick of politics. The stupid wars, jailing protesters, melting glaciers..."

Robin doesn't shake his head. But I see it anyway.

From the storage room he gets me Merrell Moab GTX 3s, US size 11 – which is UK size 10.

They're comfortable. They are size 10 (UK).

I am size 10 (UK).

I knew it.

The hapless tasks

Energy is immoral; alas, its nature is entropic.

And our lives are given over to the hapless task of the gathering and holding it against its will in structures we cannot undertake that Sisyphean project without.

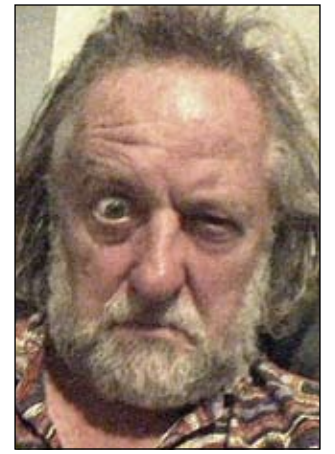
I have worked very hard for most of a year to rebuild my house in such a way that it can be rebuilt again and again after the next catastrophic flood and the next.

It will of course one day, along with the land it stands on, slide into the river. All our buildings will if we don't let insurance companies or governments bulldoze them in the meantime or let wildfire turn them into ash.

As I walk these delightful renewed rooms rich with onsite milled timber and Australian plantation marine ply, all I can see are the bits that still need completion, but no matter how much I deliver a final application - it's never finished.

And I fear this is the fate of all owner builders, it's never finished ... it's unfinished.

The energy trapped in the structure is endlessly dispersing. Entropy stands like a shabby gorgon barring the way to completion, to resolution.



Revenge of the Loon

by Laurie Axtens

I must stand down soon though, accept the outcome as complete, or at least as only needing the normal routine cleaning and painting, but I'm struggling. This job has owned me.

So many relationships fail in the face of home building, and I think this may be the issue: making the transition from obsessive effort to blithe enjoyment of that which is dissolving around you.

Soon they will offer to buy the land under this house. Will it be enough to buy land and rebuild it again, somewhere out of flood?

Oh yes another year of obsession, another year pushing this rock up the hill. And loving it.

PRIVATE CONSUMPTION AND BIOSPHERE HEALTH

Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

There is a direct link between what is consumed and the environment. Sure, no matter what we eat, the community has to hold producer practices accountable, preserve vital stands of woods and wildlife, be inclusive, but pressures on land and resources are growing: more people mean more goods and 'livestock'. Grazing takes three times more land and water than plant farming.

The economy is consumer driven.

It used to be possible to have your cake and eat it too: there was ample land and plentiful nature. Less so with eight billion people: it means more cows, bags, plastic, and rubbish.

For example, the Alstonville Plateau has good soils: red earth. Great tribal or agricultural land? More people came. Some landowners cashed in, dividing their holdings, sell it as housing blocks. A few did. Towns grew. Farms became building sites.

Cows too need space. Grazing land. Down

with flora and fauna. Not just the Northern Rivers, land surrounding Sydney. All cities, towns, nations. Earth!

There is so much concern about human habits being unsustainable that both United Nations and Richey Rich Employer Club, the World Economic Forum call for 'a new social contract', a new deal in consumer behaviour. Our acts matter.

The era of the 'customer king', mindlessly demanding more services, is coming to an end. It is not the end of individualism, but reinvigorating collective awareness: community. Let those who swear by the old ways be, with 'user pays' instead of subsidies, but re-educate flexible minds: *there is a relationship between what you use and what you get.*

With eight billion humans, human nature must adapt. Many of us act like cavemen.

What was normal in the past, is destructive now.

It's not easy teaching climate change behaviour: people still add CO2 to natural cycles while Rome burns.

E.g., how to heat food, when 'natural' gas

and wood is polluting? Impossible?

Not really: if solar powered microwaves are not wanted, a biogas unit can convert household waste to cooking gas (URL: biogas). Rural Chinese have converted pig wastes in homemade cisterns for years. New wave in Africa.

The idea that we should take *personal* responsibility for environment is growing. Pointing fingers at self. Nature, a healthy biosphere, is precious. Our legacy and future crops.

Do not diminish the vital work of environmental activists, or switched-on small business people, but there is a relation between consumption and production. More beef or chicken means more cows and fowl prisons. It also means less wallabies, goannas

and kookaburras. Badly managed pets too can be a death sentence for wildlife. Yes, producers and pet owners must behave responsibly, and there should be islands of untouched nature set aside.

Earth can still be a natural haven. Plants have all nutrients and proteins. Can be dished up tasty. Satisfy hunger. Expand consciousness.

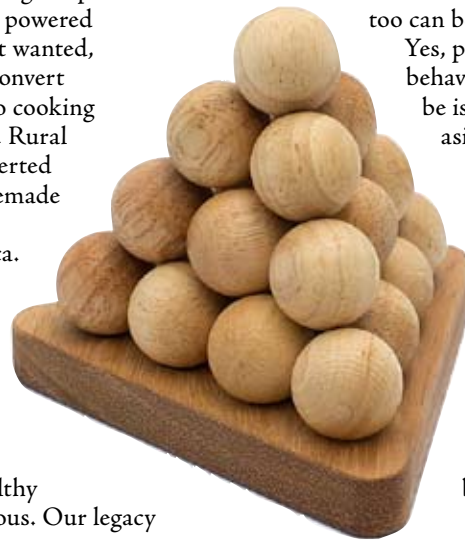
The idea that people are apex predators is a sales pitch. Human herbivore cultures prove this.

True for many in the past, but no longer is.

We are not predators by nature, but nurture. Genetics shows we are all related.

This region champions a sustainable future. Just like renewable energy revolutionised the world, so food choices will.

Food is fuel for the body. We do not need fossil fuel.



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Eternal love

by Donna Connolly

The love that you share with your animal companion never dies. It simply transforms into a new way of being once your animal friend's soul exits the physical body. Their love for us is eternal.

As our animal companions move into the spirit realm, humans are often left to grieve and figure out how to navigate the process of connecting with them in the afterlife. You might have many questions like:

How can you connect with them? How do you know they are present and connecting with you? How will you know if they've sent you a message?

There are so many ways they connect with us, and they often do it shortly after they've crossed over. They can enter your consciousness in several ways, and are often very subtle.

This is why some people find it hard to connect – they are not tuned into the subtleties.

Sometimes your rational mind may deny your connection and you may shut yourself off to the possibility that your animal companion is in fact communicating with you. That's why I want to cover just a few of the ways your animal companion might be communicating with you, right now.

First, messages can come in all forms. There are even more forms than I'll describe here, because each individual experience is so unique. The most important thing to remember is that your animal companions are trying to communicate with you and to be open to their communication coming in any and all forms.

Here are some of the common ways messages can be communicated:

Dreams: When we sleep we are in a receptive state



of mind to hear from our loved ones. On occasion they can send messages, visual cues. Even *deja vu* feelings. Sometimes we can feel their physical presence on the bed, smell their signature scent.

Electrical currents or energy: Sometimes when we are reminiscing about them they can send us signs, such as a "feeling" of reassurance, lights flashing on or off, radio stations changing.

Words: Messages can come through to you in a song, a line in something you read, or even a billboard, bumper sticker. If you feel a strong impulse to listen, or read, particularly when everything goes still, and an image of them comes into your mind. Thank them, acknowledge them. You will receive more signs.

Gifts: Messages can come with a gift, like a feather in an unusual place or a coin you find unexpectedly.

Other animals: Messages can come from a winged being like a dragonfly or bird to let you know that your animal companion is happy and free.

This list is far from extensive. Each animal has a unique set of messages (and ways of delivering them) that

will help you know without a doubt that they live on, and can continue to connect with you, after their passing.

If you're having trouble seeing, hearing, or feeling the messages from your animal friend on the other side, you can ask them to come to you at a time when you will notice them, and then be on the lookout. When you do notice them, acknowledge it!

The more we acknowledge these small inklings that our animal friends are connecting with us, the more they will do so, and the more messages we will receive.

Still curious about what happens in the afterlife and how your animal might send messages? You can book an Animal Communication session.

These readings allow you to reconnect with your beloved friends, can assist with answering unresolved questions and bring a sense of closure and reassurance while assisting with the grieving process.

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to all our amazing clients from 2022. Really looking forward to connecting with everyone in 2023.

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Nimbin NA meetings move to new space

by an anonymous contributor

For those who have had cause to be in the back room of Birth and Beyond over the last 30 years, three beautiful and distinctive banners may have caught your eye.

Colourful and enigmatic, these banners were acquired by the Nimbin Group of Narcotics Anonymous in the mid 1990s.

They are Recovery banners painted by NA artist members that were auctioned at annual Far North Coast NA Conventions.

In celebration of Recovery from Addiction, Nimbin members bid for these treasures and happily hauled these mementoes over the hills back to Nimbin to grace the walls of their meeting space in the Birth and Beyond room.

An NA meeting was opened in Nimbin in early 1992, initially in the front room of the old Masonic Hall, then a mixed practice for various healers.

By the end of that year, a larger space was required and the meeting has thus been held in the community heartland of the Birth and Beyond room since then.

In that time, so many addicts have come through the doors, some got clean and stayed clean, some relapsed, some died (both in recovery and out), while many friendships and relationships have been born, and lives shared.

Most importantly, the message of recovery from addiction has been carried week in, year out, "a day at a time", as we say.

Over the years, many members from all over the world and Australia have come to the Nimbin meeting, and most have noted both the beauty and serene safety experienced here.

This community room is certainly a special and unique space. Many parents and bubs on their birthing journey gathered in this space in the early days of Birth and Beyond.

Films, meditation groups, Kirtan singing, Yoga, healing groups, meetings and practices of all kinds have taken place in that back room, and there seems to be a palpable feel of spiritual solidity that has been osmotically absorbed into the walls over the years.

There were government grants available in the early 1980s to train women in trades and, at that time, a back verandah was added to the building by our local women.

This verandah also became a much-loved community space, and many enjoyed sitting out there, feeling our weather and looking out to the ever-changing deep beauty of the Nimbin Rocks.

Change is a constant, and that back verandah was eventually enclosed to provide rental space. And more changes are afoot as all community casual renters, including permanent rentals, such as NA and AA, are moving down to the Dance Studio, within the Acacia Building, in the Community Centre from 1st January.

NA is very sad to leave our old meeting space; Birth and Beyond was a good metaphor for getting clean and being in recovery from addiction, and we have much lived history there.

However, the back room is becoming a space for "events", and so we wish our beloved old meeting room a good life in its future incarnation.

Nimbin NA meets every Sunday at 3pm at the Dance Studio, with our iconic old Recovery Banners up on the wall.



Don't be a goon, ditch the balloon

Tweed Council has introduced a complete ban on the use of balloons in all Council buildings, parks and outdoor areas from 1st January 2023.

Once a party staple, balloons have been found to wreak havoc on animals and marine life.

Whether foil, latex or so-called environmentally-friendly materials, all balloons have the potential to cause harm to our local ecosystems.

Even products labelled biodegradable can still take years to decay and can be devastating to animals that swallow parts of them or get tangled in the strings they are often attached to.

The total balloon ban follows Council's move in September to prohibit the release of helium balloons on Council-owned land.

It also falls in line with the NSW Government's ban on single-use plastics which was recently widened to include items such as plastic containers and cups, stirrers, and plastic microbeads.



Director Sustainable Communities and Environment Stewart Brawley reports widespread acceptance of Council's ban: "The community welcomed our initial ban on balloon releases, this is just another step forward in reducing our impact and keeping the rich and diverse ecosystems found across the Tweed free of harmful pollutants."

Council is encouraging the community to share their balloon alternatives. Use the tag: #ditchtheballoon. Visit: <https://www.cleanup.org.au/balloons> for more info.

For ideas on balloon alternatives, you can also visit: tweed.nsw.gov.au/ditchtheballoon

Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Kerry Hagan

On Saturday 3rd December, Nimbin Garden Club had its annual Christmas party and our big Christmas raffle.

We would like to give a huge thanks to Nimbin Emporium, the Hemp Embassy, Nimbin Building Materials, Nimbin Apothecary, the Mended Drum at Nimbin pub, Lismore Garden Centre, Bush Theatre Café, Sustainability House, Gina La Fray, Pauline Ahearn and Otway Soaps for their very generous donations.

We again raised enough money to make a substantial donation to Nimbin Central School's Breakfast Club.



Photo: Kerry Kellaway

We had a wonderful afternoon with some 34 members and guests eating, drinking and generally making merry.

We will be starting our new year in February, with some fabulous garden visits lined up.

Brunswick River paddle



Nimbin Bushwalkers at Evans Head

by Peter Moyle

As a new year rolls around, the Nimbin Bushwalkers are planning adventures for 2023.

Last year's weather and devastation was hopefully an aberration, and condolences to those still recovering.

Many National Parks – our main source of activities – are still closed or restricted, but we have been able to structure our outings to give us a variety of coastal and rainforest walks, as well as the occasional paddle on our waterways.

During the hotter months we take a break as walking in these conditions can be a bit too strenuous and even unhealthy.

We start the year with an outing on the Brunswick River: a gorgeous paddle on a day with a big tide that will bring in crystal clear water as well as assisting tides both up-stream and then returning, plenty of time to relax and not too strenuous, and a swim as well.

We will take the incoming tide towards Tyagarah; this is one of the biggest tides of the year, so with the current helping and crystal-clear water as well, after a break at the end the tide will turn and assist returning.

Our financial year starts on 1st January and already our membership renewals are very strong, and with the assistance of walks leaders, a very promising year ahead looks likely.

Each month the *Nimbin GoodTimes* newspaper and website, or our Facebook and website will have all the up-to-date details of our walks.

Walks programme

♦ Sunday 22nd January – Brunswick Heads on the river

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498

Grade 2. Contact for info and to register your attendance.

Meet: On the town side of the Nimbin Bowling Club at 9.30am for a 10am start.

A paddle on the south arm, Simpsons Creek, tides are helping both ways so not too strenuous. Bring your canoe, kayak, or paddleboard. A stop along the way at a sandy beach for a swim, or the 150-metre walk to the deserted beach for an ocean swim. A great way to start our year, come along and enjoy a relaxing day in this beautiful area.

Bring: good sun protection and the usual lunch and water.

♦ Sunday 5th February – Goanna Headland at Evans Head

Leader: Ron Smith 0497-792-789, please ring to register your interest.

Grade 2-3. Some rocks to walk over and track can be slippery, care needed at drop-offs.

Meet: 10am at Chinaman's Beach carpark. Two beautiful coastal walks: each year we come here, and we never tire of this wonderful spot and a swim and refreshments after. A walk to Goanna Headland followed, after lunch at the beach, by a walk through Dirrawong reserve. Each walk is about 1.5 hours.

Bring: water, lunch, and a hat. Good sturdy footwear needed.

Plant of the month



Lantana
Lantana camara

by Richard Burer

When I think of this plant, I realise it's been in my life for just about forever.

Memories of lantana tunnel cubbies and its invasion into bushland is a common memory.

The cubby house thing turned into reality with stories of hippies in Nimbin making short-term housing in impenetrable thickets back in the 1970's, which is approximately 100 years since Mrs Wilson from Lismore Station requested and sourced a few plants from a Sydney nurseryman back in the day in the mid 1800's.

By the 1870's this plant had invaded the lush rich soil of the hillsides and upper slopes and edges of pasture on the fertile flats.

Described as one of the world's top 100 invaders, lantana is a rambling shrub and is now very common in the area. Recent landslides of upper slopes washing away were often dominated by lantana, its shallow roots no match for stability in steep country, its dominant growth no

match for regeneration of endemic species that may have been able to have time to establish some diversity and deeper-rooted species on our fragile soils.

These days lantana has had serious effects on our native forests, dominating the understory and in some areas seriously contributing to BMAD with the Bell Minor bird using lantana as perfect nesting habitat.

The effect on marsupials, and in particular koalas, means fauna find it difficult to navigate thick lantana and its effect on connectivity is well recognised.

Medicinally, lantana has many uses and it's a useful pesticide. In Africa, stems are still used for small chook runs and cages, and not so long ago in China, the stems were once fashioned into toothbrushes.

In Nimbin, bush kids love making floral arrangements and of course it can always be useful as a living hedge plant.

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant: richard.burer@gmail.com

Kyogle's Labyrinth now complete

by Meg Bishop

The Kyogle Labyrinth sits on a quiet piece of land between Alcorn Park and the Kyogle Caravan Park. It was built by the community in partnership with Kyogle Council, and is a place of quiet contemplation available to all.

Back in 2016, Growing Kyogle sponsored a Bright Ideas Night in which community members or groups presented their ideas for projects to improve the town. The people's choice winner was a Labyrinth.

The Friends of the Labyrinth formed to support the development of the Labyrinth. Friends of Labyrinth are committed to inclusivity, connectivity and encouraging as much community participation as possible. The Labyrinth is being developed within a community development



Margie assists with laying the pavers

framework.

While Friends of the Labyrinth has around 25 active members, our greatest resource has been the voluntary contribution of the broader community. We have recorded over 3,500 voluntary hours of work contributed through street stalls, working bees, workshops and many sundry activities.

The labyrinth is now physically complete having been built in stages. A

concrete foundation was provided by Kyogle Council. On top of this 1,650 bricks were fixed and above that 1,745 pavers at the final level, with 650 of these pavers being engraved with sponsor names or images.

We have just laid another 68 mosaic pavers which were made by the community in a series of workshops. Our next stage is to design and build a brochure and a webpage so we can be linked to the

World-Wide Labyrinth Locator.

Garden beds have been built or extended to enhance the setting which is now quite delightful with an entrance portal and an interpretive sign which explains how to use a Labyrinth. Hint: It is not a maze.

The Labyrinth is a lasting community based installation for residents and visitors alike. It provides a place to remember and contemplate disasters both personal and universal such as flood, bushfires and pandemics. As a Special Place for Healing, Celebration and Personal Reflection, the Labyrinth has endless possible future uses.

We invite you all to come and walk the labyrinth and experience for yourself the calming effect of quiet contemplation.

Self-awareness around horses

by Suzy Maloney

Self-awareness is understanding our own thoughts and emotions and how these affect behaviours, others around us, and ourselves. It is essential to the development of emotional intelligence and emotional regulation.

Being self-aware when we are around horses, provides insight into our thoughts and emotions resulting in us acting instead of reacting. We all have automatic reactions to events around us. Sometimes horses can push a lot of buttons in humans, resulting in a bit too much reacting and not enough acting. This can damage the relationship between horse and human and make normally easy things quite difficult.

I recently had the experience of getting my thumb squashed under the hoof of a horse. It was a silly accident, but my automatic reaction was a flush of anger. If I'd expressed this anger, the horse, who was oblivious to my thumb and what had happened, would not understand anything, and may have become afraid and distrusting of me as a result. Instead, after doing a brief 'Ouch!', I took a deep breath, realised the whole thing was totally my fault, and started laughing at myself. I then planned how I could do this particular thing differently in the future to avoid it happening again. If I'd gone blindly with my anger the whole scenario would have been very different.



This is a simple example of emotional regulation, looking at one's own emotional state and deciding to regulate it. This is different to suppressing emotions. If I'd suppressed my anger, it would have still been inside me, and everything I did with that horse would be slightly different from then on. I may have become aggressive or bossy with the horse. Or I could have become fearful of horses, always on the lookout for them hurting me and not wanting to handle them.

Ultimately, we are in charge of how we experience and express our emotions, but we can't do this without self-awareness. Self-awareness allows us to be in tune with what we're feeling and what's causing the emotion, then emotional regulation goes a step further and looks at how, when or if we should display those emotions.

What I have observed is that with one person a horse can be a huge button pusher, then with someone else

hardly at all. This raises the question of where is the work required, with the horse or with the human? Ultimately it always has to be with both. We do need to look at horses' behaviours and educate where required, and at the same time we need to look at ourselves, and what is happening there.

As horse people we all need to engage on a **continuous journey of self-discovery**. Paying attention to what's happening inside ourselves when working with horses is sometimes more important than the outside work we do with the horse, and delivers huge rewards for both ourselves and the horses.

Empathy fuels connection between individuals. It's the ability to sense the emotions of the horse and imagine what it's like for them, what's it like to be in their hooves? Horses have different perspectives, needs and intentions to us, seeing things from their perspective allows us to connect with and understand them on a deeper level.

Developing self-awareness around horses helps us regulate our emotions and feel empathy for them, resulting in more understanding and richer relationships. Being more in touch with ourselves always allows us to be more in touch with others, regardless of the species.

Wishing you a wonderful 2023.

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NIMBIN HEMP EMBASSY

Communication in the Coolamon Tree



by Les Rees

I'm currently sitting on the deck at the Cawongla Store; a place I like to visit for a coffee and a chat with friends or simply to enjoy watching the birdlife in the Coolamon tree with its branches conveniently situated right next to comfortable seats.

It's such a beautiful tree that always has something going on within its canopy. At the moment it's full of pink flowers attracting the nectar eating birds that frequent it at this time of year.

I often find myself lost in the world they inhabit, as it's so interesting to witness the language they use for communication.

A few days ago a blue faced honeyeater and her baby arrived to feed. She was attempting to show her youngster that it was now ready to collect its own nectar but this little rascal wasn't having any of it.

The antics were so funny to watch, as it kept up its protests in a tirade of what seemed like nothing short of abusive language. It was as if it was saying "Hello I am still here you know, I'm hungry, feed meeeee..." along with

what appeared to be a torrent of vitriolic swear words!

A few days later they turned up again and the baby was beginning to get the message, feeding happily on its own until a particularly bossy Rainbow Lorikeet took a dislike to the baby providing it with a lesson in territorial tactics.

Mum watched quietly from a distance until her baby retreated to an area on a nearby branch, then she checked that it was OK and gave it a small feed and things went back to normal. It was so interesting to witness the weaning process and to see the similarities amongst all animal life including humans.

Petty squabbles over the best choice of nectar bearing flowers regularly break out between the rainbow lorikeets, honeyeaters and the noisy miners. There always seems to be that one aggressive bird that greedily stands guard over the food source, spending far more time in conflict than they ever do eating and I find myself thinking that there are so many parallels with life in the world of humans.

My favourites have to be the magpies because they can be so friendly and

amusing. These cheeky imps are particularly adept at stealing tasty morsels of café food off the plates when the customers aren't looking and some are even happy to feed out of your hand. They're also excellent singers creating a feeling of bliss for those who sit back on their chairs and listen to their elaborate songs.

The place is filled with the continual hum of chatter between the birds and I get the feeling that the birds' community is not dissimilar to all the other animals that coexist in our environment.

The value of space plays such an important factor in the role of communication for all animals. I continually see it with my horses as they manoeuvre their way around each other. They're in constant communication making decisions about how close they can be to food sources and water, which is defined by the specifics of herd leadership roles.

They use gestures to create requests, demands and requirements which involves the use of directing energy towards specific areas of the body that can be asking questions such as, "Can I stand near you, groom you, share your food, rest my head on your back, play with you" etc.

Demands may be to move other horses away from their space or get them out of dangerous situations.

When I began to understand the specifics of body language, I became aware that there were so many places on the body that are used as a means of giving and receiving communication. But that will have to wait for another article. Happy New Year

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