



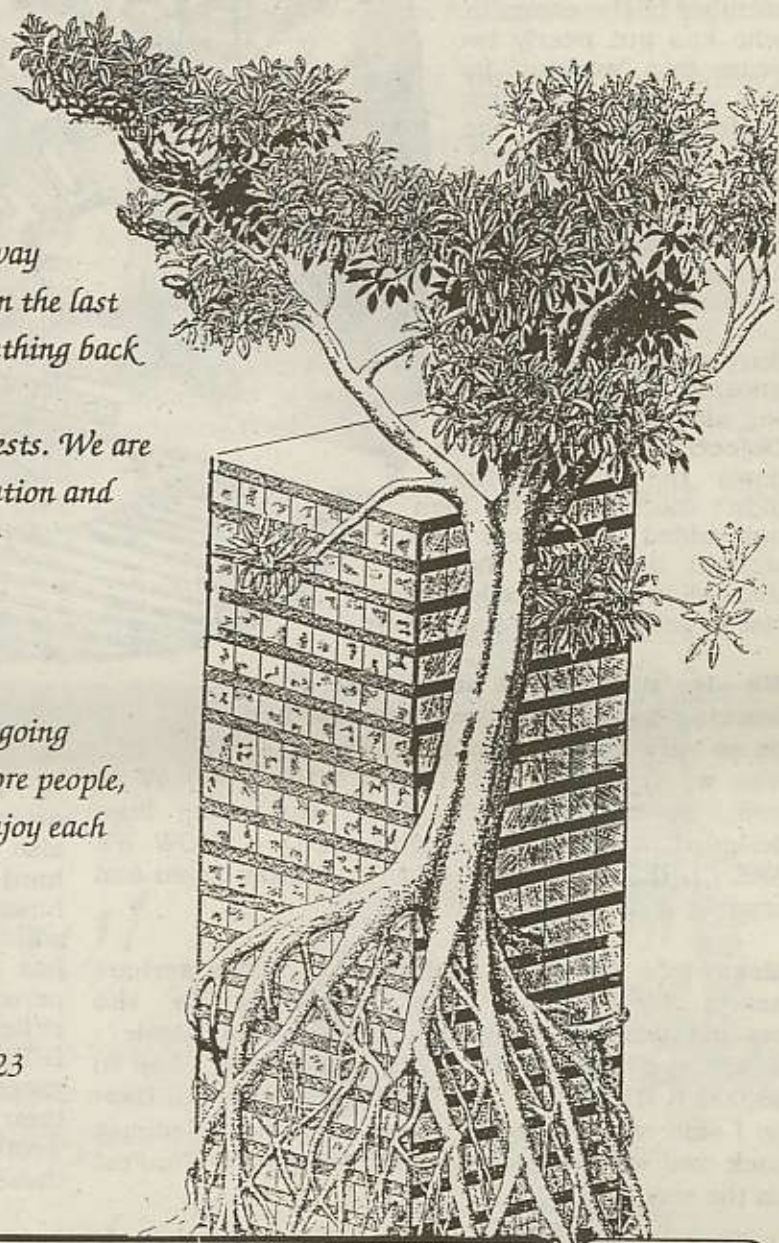
ISSN 0156-8108

Tree Planting.

Would you like to enjoy a weekend away camping in the Spring with good company on the last ConFest site at Walwa? We plan to put something back into the land on which we camped over three ConFests. We are arranging with the Department of Conservation and Environment to plant 600 seedlings on the site.

The date chosen is the weekend 28th-29th September, some of us will be going up on the 26th (Melbourne Cup Day). The more people, the less work, and more time to relax and enjoy each others company, or perhaps do some site seeing in the area.

*If you plan to go please ring
Bob B.H. (03) 313 8241 A.H. 311 4923
or Eva (03) 386 7614,
or drop us a note via D.T.E. office.*



ISSUE

67

Down To Earth News.
Registered By Australia Post - Publication VBH 2784
Published by Down To Earth (Vic) Co-op. Soc. Ltd, 247 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne, Vic. 3000. Telephone (03) 6544521

AUGUST
1991

What's been happening at D.T.E. Melbourne ?

A personal report by George.

Well, this is just the voice of one of the people who attended quite a few meetings at the "D.T.E. Office". The following account hasn't been approved by the whole Committee, which seems to run on the principles of an 'Anarchist Collective'. In other words, for the following I am personally responsible. Maybe you, who weren't there at those meetings, maybe you don't mind very much about those legalistic and rigid niceties, as long as you're getting the gist about what has been happening at the main office.

Many meetings have been taken up with discussing the "Aims and Objectives" of D.T.E. A valid point, particularly when you consider that at least one member of the committee who has put nearly two years into 'working' for this mob and then confesses that at the end that she didn't know what D.T.E. is all about. I felt sorry for her and participated in shedding some light on this confusion.

Sure enough, we spend another Saturday talking about these Aims & Objectives, we wrote down the current lines, didn't discuss any of them but added some new ones without discussing them either. All in all an excellent exercise in getting things somewhere.

We also spend quite some time at working out why we were supposed to be so very sick. I mean real sick this D.T.E. was, we apparently didn't know WHO or WHAT we were. Several workshops later, run along lines designed in the early seventies, AND NOW WE ARE CURED !! Hooray, D.T.E. is healthy again and capable of running a ConFest !!

Meanwhile we were subjected to some serious hassle by one of the higher-ups in the organisation. And I mean, real serious hassle - involving calling in the C.I.B. (police) and close to \$8,000 !!. That's big shit, man. But all is well now. As I said: we are healthy now, we have our money back and we can proceed with getting the ConFest on the way.

**So, up till here the good news.
Now for the news that counts.**

The site of the next ConFest is unlikely to be at Walwa again. There are some very genuine reasons for changing the site.

1.- We have been there three times and people in another area should be given the 'chance to benefit from a ConFest. Not only does a ConFest bring lots of nice money into an area. Close to six figures! A ConFest also gives many people in the local district a chance to widen their horizon regarding alternative lifestyles and things related to it.

2. Another site brings with it new challenges regarding the environmental impact a ConFest creates. As a matter of fact, it has been suggested that from now on we (DTE) stay at a site for maximum five years and regenerate the environment in consultation with the locals. For instance, planting trees AND CARING for them in the early stages. Or whatever else the local population finds necessary or desirable or advisable for that site.

3. The current site at Walwa seems to have attracted too many beer-slab carrying yahoos, also known as piss-heads. And too many hard-druggies. Now, D.T.E. is indeed not in the business of telling people what to do. That is not what is behind these very genuine objections to too much beer and hard drugs. Admittedly, I personally didn't come across gross abuse of either. But some of my 'brothers and sisters' in D.T.E. have been really hurt by what they saw as excessive drinking and drugging. And because their hurt is indeed genuine I support my 'brothers and sisters' in finding an answer to these excesses.



Never mind whether I did or did not see what they saw - I DO agree that it sucks to bring the goddam suburbs with all their shit into the bush. It sucks to have a blaring disco at night drowning the sound of the river pattering along. It sucks to have a piss-head puking his slob where sometime later some gentle mud-people walk barefooted. To have some arse-holes, drugged out of their tree, abusing children. As if this world isn't already tough enough for our children without that kind of hassle.

So,rather than hanging the bastards such as they do in some countries, we simply change environment. We have a smaller sized ConFest. We have then more chance to relate to each other. We can be more supportive to our brothers and sisters who are in need of heavy, artificial stimulants. We may even learn some tolerance, which is a hard thing to learn in the frenzy of a large, city sized festival.

To this end, i.e. finding a site for a ConFest, a number of people did a lot of work on various weekends and at personal expense to find sites. A report on that will come soon from the Committee.

Coming back to this theme of 'TOLERANCE' and the theme of 'CARING'.....

At the BREDBO ConFest, for instance, we had this mob of the Hare Krishna people. Sure, they started their dancing and chanting and drumming at about four o'clock in the morning. That did piss off some people. BUT they also cared for many penniless ConFest goers and gave them food for free! They made space to care for those who were O.D.ing on drugs. They cared for those who were lost and frightened. And in return for their gentle and loving caring, everybody else gave them tolerance for their need to sing and praise their Lord.

Have we seen something similar from the religious groups in the past few years ?

Another instance : workshops leaders showed respect and care for their workshop attendees.

Nowadays we see workshop leaders putting a hessian wall around "their" patch, forcing their attendees to remain within the "wall" for many hours past the agreed and stated time without allowing them food. Why this "them and us" attitude? Is this the sign of the society we so slowly and with great difficulty are trying to create?

One more instance : masseurs used to show respect for their 'patients' and if they tried to race off someone, they had the good grace to do so at least in their own tent. Now, we bounce up against someone who has to be thrown off the site because two very upset women alleged that he stuck his thumb into them ! For crying out loud !

The moral of the story is : Next time you come to a ConFest, try to remember that we are seeking a better society as each one of us sees that to be.

We are not only seeking, but we are trying also to communicate with each other into reaching some kind of agreement towards a common ground in this endeavour. It's bloody difficult enough as is without artificial walls or randy emotions or self-centered religiousness messing things up.

When a brother or sister is in need of artificial stimulants, try to show some loving care by gently trying to find out if maybe there is an alternative to their kind of stimulation. Don't cast them out by refusing them entry.

Anyway, enough for today. I'm sure you're getting the trend.

George.

A FORESTS URGENT PLEA

Chaelundi Needs your help

Now! Now! Now! Now!

Probably the most beautiful & diverse forest left in New South Wales is going under the loggers saw. If you can do anything to help, be it physical, financial or moral assistance, please ring (066) 213 278 or (03) 417 7450



*Have you always wanted to learn the finer points of silk screen printing?
Have you yearned to discover the secrets of desk-top publishing?*

Or...

*Is your knowledge of permaculture
life or the Universe lying dormant and unshared?*

Beginning this issue . . .

THE POWER EXCHANGE

*We'd like to start using this Newsletter to continue the exchange of knowledge,
skills and ideas that Confest provides.*

*The format is informal. We invite you to organize small group workshops, or one on one
tutorial sessions, or contact people who are offering a workshop that interests you.*

Two columns headed "I want to teach . . ." and "I want to learn . . ." will be featured in DTE News.

To participate in THE POWER EXCHANGE ring Jenny on 4296562 and leave

- your name or initial
- the field you are interested in teaching/learning
- phone number

We will print all entries, and leave it to you to follow up the workshops, talks and tutorials offered.

I WANT TO TEACH . . .

*George Schmidt is offering a bread-making demo, to
be held in Brunswick, Saturday 31st of August at
4pm. If you're interested please*

Phone Eva on 386 7614.

I WANT TO LEARN . . .

*Photographic skills - from camera handling to
darkroom techniques.*

Phone Ron on 4281770

As you can see, there's room for lots more.



We received a letter from one our friends at Walwa, who - in the past - has greatly assisted us with the organising of a ConFest.

We think that the contents need reading and attention. We consider these comments very valid and very much in line with what has been written in the rest of this newsletter. We CAN do with a lot more care and respect towards people and the environment. Anyway, here is most of the letter we received.

""-- There would be no denying that there is opposition to Confest within this district, in some cases quite strong opposition, but **I can find NO evidence that there is any more opposition now than there was three years ago**, i.e., before you even came here, and I think you can all take that as a compliment, that after three confests in the one place, there is no more opposition than before came. I think also that I have been told that this has not always been the case in other locations, so I come to my first point, perhaps if you have a location where you are generally welcome, you perhaps should consider staying there, and perhaps working on the relationship with the district so that it is strengthened.

It would seem to me, that after speaking with a wide cross section of the locals, that if Confest decided to come back to this area, they would be welcomed. **There are certain areas of your organisation of the event which we are concerned about and which I would like to suggest you look at.**

These are I feel :

1.- Either you are getting a different crowd now to that of past years, or your control of them is bad, but we felt that **THE GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE AT CONFEST TO US LOCALS HAD CHANGED FOR THE WORST, THEY SEEMED TO HAVE LESS RESPECT, THEY WERE IN SOME CASES RUDER AND MORE DEMANDING IN TOWN, AND IN THE BUSINESS HOUSS. THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF NUDITY WITHIN TOWN, and this upset many people**, there were cases, especially after Confest was over, of **PEOPLE SLEEPING IN THE STREETS AND IN VARIOUS FRONT GARDENS AROUND TOWN, IN FACT WE WERE A BIT CONCERNED AT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO LINGERED ON AFTER CONFEST HAD FINISHED, IN SOME CASES FOR WEEKS. I know crowd control is against your philosophy, BUT THE LOCALS HAVE RIGHTS TOO**, and I think it's something you have to address.

2.- **THE DEGREE OF FIRE CONTROL WAS TERRIBLE**, we saw numerous **camp fires lit in extremely dangerous places**. I don't think city people realize how fire conscious we in the country are, with very good reason, **IT WOULD ONLY TAKE ONE INCIDENT OF FIRE, AND YOUR WELCOME HERE, AND I GUESS ANYWHERE IN RURAL VICTORIA WOULD BE GONE.**

3.- Your handling of garbage, and the garbo's wasn't good. Once again, you probably consider garbage as a relatively minor thing which you put out and it mysteriously disappears. Well, in the case of ConFest you generate a hell of a lot of it. **IN FACT, CONFEST ACCOUNTS FOR MORE GARBAGE AT THE WALWA TIP IN A FEW DAYS, THEN THE WHOLE WALWA DISTRICT IN 12 MONTHS. IT IS A MAJOR ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM - and in spite to your commitment to recycling as an organisation, FEW OF THE CONESTERS SEEM TO COOPERATE."**

(end of letter - capitals & bolding by the editors)

P.T.O.

So, there you are, my dear friends. It seems to me that we either COLLECTIVELY pull our fingers out, or else ConFests as we know them will be soon a thing of the past.

We just have to learn to be respectful towards people. I know it isn't easy, I know some people irritate the hell out of you and so on but the locals HAVE A RIGHT to have THEIR feelings and attitudes respected. They are our hosts, they do assist us in many ways, and thus it is a matter of common sense we show something in return.

On the subject of fire : well what can I say? There are arseholes around who just never learn. THE ONLY THING LEFT IS THAT WE ALL - COLLECTIVELY - SHOW MORE AWARENESS AND KEEP OUR DUMB "BROTHERS AND SISTERS" (without fire control sense) UNDER CONTROL. THIS IS ONE AREA WERE YOU JUST CANNOT BE "NICE" AND DISCUSS THE SITUATION WHILE A BUSHFIRE IS STARTING ALL AROUND YOU.

On the subject of GARBAGE : again, it sounds like some fair criticism. Us beautiful people who care SO MUCH about dolphins, potterooos and all the heart warming stuff of this new age, deep down we really behave like a bunch of shits some time, don't we?

I know, YOU are all right. In which case I wonder why you and I don't do a bit more caring. Let us give this matter more attention at the next ConFests, dear brother and sister, shall we?

George Schmidt



Probably one of the most contentious issues over the years within DTE and at ConFest has been "rules".

Should we have them? Who should make them? Should we enforce them? If so, who should enforce them? When? We have discussed and debated the issue, made rules, changed rules, made good rules, made bad rules, sometimes we have even lived by the bloody things.

Having been involved with ConFest "security" for several years, I have been strongly involved in this debate. After sometimes doing it right, sometimes stuffing it up and sometimes hibernating 50 foot up a gum tree to avoid it, I don't think we should make rules or try to enforce them in any way.

However I do think that as people perporing to be interested in a more progressive society it is our duty to both recognise and if necessary help to protect the rights of others in that community.

If we all respect each others rights we have a large part of the society we are working towards, one where mutual respect is the starting point of interaction. Unfortunately there is an "if" there, so that means that those of us who feel that this ruleless society is worth working for need to put in the energy needed to ensure that our and each others rights are respected.

This may at times mean assisting each other during disputes, or even physical intervention if the situation is severe enough. The more of us who do this the more it becomes the community standing up for its right and the less it remains "enforcers" whether they be cops or someone doing ConFest "security".

Security should mean feeling secure, not rules. One thing we can do at ConFest is to allow people the basic right to feel secure, to feel free to grow and express themselves, to learn, to share.

...Afterthought:

After writing this article, events happened in DTE which caused me to look introspectively at what I had written. The end result was to form the question "if DTE cannot live without the need for continually making more restrictive rules, how can we help to make happen a gathering at which there are no rules?" At the moment we spend heaps of time saying that we can't have rules at ConFest and as much time imposing rules upon ourselves in DTE because we don't trust each other or ourselves. More and more, because of our own petty fears and jealousies we create an aura of mistrust which creates untrustworthiness.

Our group is so smothered by secret numbers, locks, rules and a rampant paranoia because "someone might rip us off" that we continue to make working within DTE more and more impossible, just to photocopy you must be the one person entrusted to hold "the secret, sacred photocopier numerical mantra." Only one person in DTE is entrusted with this holy utterance. Keys to the office are like holy icons, getting in is getting harder and harder and "paranoia incorporated" are mumbling about yet more security tightening. And slowly but surely DTE curls further into its self perpetuating fetal position.

At ConFest it's nasty to have rules but in DTE we're determined to legislate ourselves into heaven. So next time you meet a "co-ordinator" at ConFest, the dazed look in their eyes is because they are having trouble adjusting from Down To Earth world to ConFest world, try to be patient and understand.

Ron Fletcher

If these are the sort of things we want from ConFest then we must decide if these things deserve the energy we will need to put out to help each other to attain them.

There are some things which must be laid down as unalterable. These things relate to the laws of nature and the land, they include fire safety and other issues which can cause damage to the place where we are. Our basic right to expect our immediate space to be inviolate. Our right to expect the shared space around us to be kept in a state which is best for the group.

We must decide whether one person's rights can be allowed to overwhelm the group and if so in what circumstances. With rights must come the maturity to recognise the difference between personal rights and our responsibility to act in a way which is conducive to co-existence with the community we are in.

Are we a society, if so do the group's rights come before the rights of the individual? I feel that these questions must be seriously addressed by the ConFest community before we can move to a system where rules are not needed, but the community protects itself by common consensus acting to control people who are counterproductive to the group.

If we can start at ConFest hopefully one day we can move out into the larger community with some hope of helping a society without authority figures to develop.

For a society like that to work we all need to take responsibility for our actions and be prepared to help each other if there is a lapse in someone's actions or attitudes. There may be times when this help means stopping aggression or intervening in a situation where you may receive a lot of offence.

Even though it may be frightening at the time, the interactive skills learned in this type of conflict are worth learning and can only improve your confidence and communication skills.

WITH A LITTLE BIT OF TOLERANCE.

This is what I read a little while ago in a newsletter from a friend of mine.

"CONFEST - MASSAGE VILLAGE.

"The Massage Village at the ConFest was - i'm happy to say - a definitive success. Thank you to the people in D.T.E. for this opportunity. The ConFest itself was a rather mixed bag of impressions.

"Thank heaven, there was no amplified music !! Hooray !! For the first time ever did the organisers dare to state the obvious, i.e. leave the disco in the city, don't take it to the river. The way the workshops were organised and the alternative energy (sun power) were very well done and a solid basis for following ConFests.

"The new year's eve Raindance was something to experience. Hundreds snaked around the site, chanting and drumming, and believe it or not ... the rain DID come. (Bloody predictable 'cause it was into the 40 degrees and a midsummer thunder was obviously in the making.) Nevertheless, it was quite, quite spectacular when it happened !! The gathering around Car Henge was inevitable and lasted till around 6 or 7 in the morning of New Year. A wee bit too long, according to the taste of some people.

"Let's not forget that just about all the people come from the cities. All year long one has to do what 'They/Society' tell us to do - all year long one has to consider one's neighbours, be quiet, keep your cat and dog under control, don't mow the lawn too early or when Ray Martin is on telly, don't have a good belly laugh in the tram or people think you're crazy, don't sneeze in church, don't fart in Parliament (although that's sometime the only appropriate noise). Don't do this, do that, be considerate, think of others, don't annoy 'them', wipe yourself out for the benefit of the greater good.

"Is it any wonder that just for half a day in a whole long year, all these pent up suppressions boil over ?

"How did i react to that? To be true, it annoyed the hell out of me by the time it was seven o'clock in the morning and i still heard the drums and that gawd-awful bell. Being an old groupie, grand-dad of the hippies so to speak, i'm used to off beat happenings.

"But i could have turned around, went back to sleep in the security that the day after tomorrow society will be again as I know it and can (handle)/control it, the 'rules' of society would protect me again and I could have these noise makers by the short and curlies by sicking the cops onto them. Business as usual, what?

"Anyways, enough said. By and large it was real good and worth the effort going 'again next time!"

We do have a bit of a dilemma here. There are people who come to a confest with children who - obviously - need to sleep during the night. With the drumming going on at "Car-Henge" that would just about have been impossible.

So, how DO we resolve this dilemma? Shall we make another rule that says - for instance - "noise only between this and that time"? Or shall we make a rule that says "Parents with kids must stay at the other side of the confest site opposite to the drummers"? Another easy way would be - and this would solve the whole problem for sure - to make a rule that says "Parents with kids and Drummers are all forbidden entry to a confest".

Do you truly think that any Rule, and I mean ANY GODDAM RULE could possibly solve the antagonistic attitude between pro and anti drummers?

I reckon that rules and regulations do very little good or have a positive result at all. They are only maintained because the rule-makers have the power to police and enforce their rules. But only for as long as they are in power. As soon as the opposition wins, rules are reversed and the same old shit hits the fan but now from the opposite direction.

Then shall we live without any rules? No, not at all. What a confest is could be the place to learn 'to live with self imposed rules based on mutual consideration and care.' Meaning : each person makes an agreement with themselves something along the lines of (coming from the pro-noise people) The kids must have their sleep,

therefore I will voluntary restrain myself at least to some extent or - alternatively - (coming from the anti-noise people)

Those drummers are a real pain in the arse, but they have that crazy need and how about I don't stop them for once, seeing that in a few days I'll be the boss again in the city anyway.

It is not an easily solved dilemma, this pro and anti noise. Maybe in its own organic and therefore slow manner, this can be resolved IF EACH ONE OF US TRIES TO BE A BIT MORE TOLERANT. And maybe talk with each other about the dilemma at a safe time. Such as now in this newsletter, for instance. Safe- as in - no way that this could have been discussed with any kind of rationality on New Years Eve while the people were at 'Car-Henge'.

And this tolerance or lack thereof is apparent on many different levels. Some people go to any length to force others to create a totally drug free, tobacco free and alcohol free

DON'T BREAK YOUR NECK TRYING TO SAVE RAINFORESTS
DON'T GET BULLDOZED TRYING TO SAVE GRASSLANDS
DON'T GET SHOT IN THE BACK TRYING TO STOP THE NEXT DOOR POISONING FACTORY
DON'T GET REDUCED TO A NERVOUS WRECK TRYING TO SAVE THOSE NASTY LITTLE PLANTS AND ANIMALS FROM BECOMING EXTINCT
DON'T GET PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE JUNTA TRYING TO STOP THE ARMS RACE
JUST GET A FRIEND TO PLANT A TREE ON YOUR GRAVE



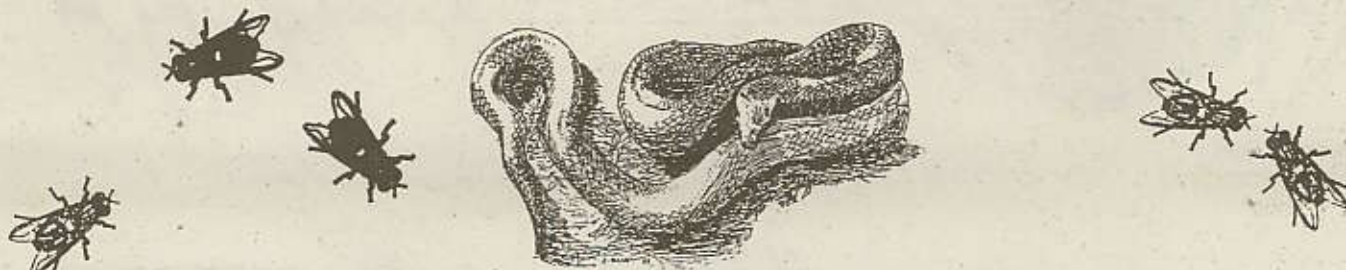
confest. Because to them the use of those articles is abhorrent. And the bloody difficult thing is that their sense of abhorrence is indeed very genuine. They are truly deep down in their personality badly hurt by the use of such diversions. I DO understand that, despite my very personal opinion that such an attitude, such rigidity, is a sign of a very disturbed psyche and the sign of a psychologically very imbalanced person. However, it is unreal to expect such a rigid person to adopt some sense of TOLERANCE.

So, what do we do in such a case? Hang the bastard? Drown him or her in the river? Or are we personally to submit ourselves (again) to the demands of a rigid, narrow focused person? Which of these options do you think are viable?"

And so it goes on. This person reckons it is a grand thing to get stoned out of your tree and keep everybody else awake. That person reckons it's great to get pissed to the eyeballs and puke all over the place. This one cannot stand cars and wants none around. That one hates amplified music the list goes on and on. I've heard them all.

To finish this chat : Strange though that all this hassle was unheard of and not known at Cotter, Bredbo, Berri and the first two Glenlyon ConFests. Strange indeed. So, what the hell happened to the old style , warm, human, loose, cool, laid back ConFests? WE HAVE BECOME LESS TOLERANT - THAT'S FOR SURE. (And none the better for it.)

George Schmidt.



Report From The ConFest Market Co-ordinator.

Stallholders in the Food Market at ConFest 90-91 were charged \$200 per stall. All people working in the stalls were charged the same entrance fee as any one else. Down To Earth provided solar generated power for lighting for those stalls in the designated Food Market area and minimal space for all in two cool rooms. There were no restrictions on the size of stalls.

Original planning for the Food Market was for all stalls be together in that area on the left of the main road going into the site near Admin/Info/1st Aid. As it turned out a mistake was made by having the food market in that position. Access for people in wheel chairs was impossible and unfortunately most of the stalls got bogged bringing their wares into the area.

Some stalls asked to setup in other areas. This was agreed to on three conditions:

- (1) That they must supply their own power - petrol driven generators were not acceptable.
- (2) That once the stall was set up all deliveries were to be made by physically carrying the goods or using a hand cart.
- (3) One vehicle per stall was permitted to park near the stall for a safe lock up area.

Many people felt that by splitting the Food Market, a traditional meeting area, the village square, was lost. Others enjoyed having food outlets spread around the site. One large group of campers behind those food stalls in the "Craft Market" were very upset at having food stalls near their village. It was the third year they had created a village in that area.

The main complaints were the close proximity of hot stoves, larger than usual compost bins and the late night noises that the Food Market stalls traditionally attract. There were quite a few angry words, tears and very un-ConFest displays of intolerance before a resolution was achieved.

ConFest was much larger than expected. Spoilage of fresh food due to the heat had not been considered in planning. To adequately meet the demand at the food stalls larger supplies of fresh produce were needed. The second condition for stalls not in the designated Food Market was reviewed and changed. All deliveries were to be made to stalls by 9am.

The 10 food stalls provided remarkably tasty food and refreshments under extremely harsh conditions. The future directions of a ConFest Food Market are being considered by a group at Down To Earth at the moment. Comments and suggestions would be welcomed.

At the time of writing this the Chai Bus have yet to pay their site fees.

Cass.



Well, here it is at last, a DTE Newsletter. Bet you thought we'd gone to sleep or something didn't you. But somehow or another a collective finally got together and did it, we are; Jenny, George, Mark, Eva, Bob & Ron. and we'll probably even get it together to do it again one day.

Farewell for now.

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No. VBH 2748

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mswll *WhinTom*

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