



Photo: Mike Frey

The super-tutor

Ruth Barker has been given the gift of life – twice. Now, the double-lung transplant recipient and learning specialist is “smashing goals” and helping children reach their potential, too.

The lottery of life has not been particularly kind to Ruth Barker. She has had to confront the premature death of a parent from cancer, a broken home, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, the deaths of a sibling and close friends, her own breast cancer, the diagnosis of a life-limiting illness, organ transplantation, and unsuccessful attempts at IVF and surrogacy. Not just one or two of these events over the course of a lifetime – *all* of them and all before the age of 42.

This litany of life challenges would have crushed the strongest of characters, but Ruth remains defiant in the face of adversity. There is steel behind those brown eyes and her survivor's instinct bristles palpably close to the surface – forged, perhaps, all those years ago, on the remote 12,000-acre wheat and sheep farm in Western Australia where she grew up as a sick child who had lost her mother too soon.

Today, she still lives on the land – with her husband, Kevin Grover, and cat Daisy in

Possum Creek – using her decades of life and professional experience to help young kids overcome their difficulties at The Hut Child Development and Family Learning Centre she runs. While clients are known to refer to her affectionately as “the super-tutor”, Ruth is a Montessori facilitator who works with extra-needs children from toddlerhood to six years of age, and a literacy and numeracy mentor for preschoolers to 12 years, specialising in learning disorders such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

From the editor

There are many reasons to loathe the month of February. By now, well-intentioned New Year's resolutions have been well and truly laid to waste (there's no more denying it); kids have left their halcyon summers behind to head reluctantly back into the classroom; and the dreaded Valentine's Day looms with all its expectations and inevitable disappointments (fluffy toy, anyone?).

But, then, there's also a lot to love about Feb: you can look forward to making new promises (a do-over when the Lunar New Year kicks off), freeing yourself of the kids – finally! – and celebrating the 14th with someone special.

If that thought leaves you cold, this Ask Gran Not Google Q&A (see story at right) just might thaw you out...

Q. *How do you know when it's love?*

A. *If you love someone, you may feel a funny feeling in your tummy. It's hard to stop thinking about them. They make you want to be the best person you can be. But don't forget to always love yourself.*

I wouldn't dare go so far as to say that this first *Herald* issue of 2019 is about love, but there is certainly a lot of passion in these pages – like Ruth Barker's zest for life (page 1), the Bangalow community's empathy for Australia's drought-stricken farmers (page 4), our local schools' dedication to the highest teaching standards (page 6), our talented students' devotion to their art (page 8) and our religious congregations' commitment to social justice issues (page 12).

Now, that's a lot of love in our little corner of the world – even for the romantically challenged.

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SENIORS MOMENT

Age-old wisdom

The Ask Gran Not Google project is bridging the generation gap, one question at a time.

These days, not many families have three generations living together under the one roof, giving children and grandparents natural, ready access to each other. The laps of seniors often lie empty – and on the laps of children sit mobile devices. And while we all know that Google is a useful source of information, it's not as wise as seniors.

Each year as part of the NSW Seniors Festival (13-24 February 2019), aged-care services provider Feros Care runs the Ask Gran Not Google intergenerational project, which aims to connect children with seniors and spark conversation. The initiative is run through schools, with children invited to write or video-message their questions to seniors.

As one student said last year, "I loved doing Ask Gran Not Google. Nanna is way better than a screen. Did you know that ages ago there was no speaker-phone, so you had to keep the phone to your ear, and you only had one rubbish bin? No recycling." The things we learn!

See feroscare.com.au/ask-gran-not-google for more information on how to participate.

Jenny Bird



Social meet-ups

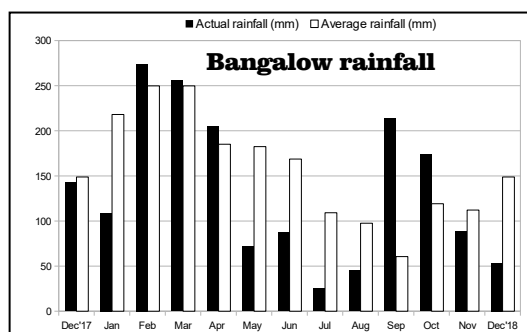
Bangalow resident and Elders real estate agent Janice Maple is no stranger to feelings of isolation and uncertainty – despite running a successful property business where she had constant dealings with people. Following the breakdown of her relationship several years ago, a seed was planted, nourished by discussions with other local women who found themselves in similar circumstances – single and alone – or were new to the area and unsure how to meet others.

The idea was to start a social club as a way to connect women living in and around the 2479 zone; to create a network through which they could arrange their own social activities. "It could be a walk around the sports fields with your dog, lunch or just a coffee," explains Janice, who has lived in Bangalow since 2001. She says the response to the idea has been really exciting. "I've been blown away by how positively it has been received."

The INClub will be based on a closed interactive website (theinclub.com.au) where women post a profile and extend invitations to others, suggesting activities. The club's launch party is on 13 February at the Bangalow Guesthouse. Called A Soiree on the Lawn, the evening is an opportunity for women to gather, meet and mingle, as well as sign up as members.

Janice urges all interested women to come along and join The INClub and participate in events. "It will be a great way to meet new women and have a fun time without an agenda," she says. Membership costs \$25 a year.

Digby Hildreth



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Ruth with 15-year-old Hayden and his dad, David. Photo: Mike Frey

Ruth has up to 15 students on her roll, including Hayden Tunks, 15, who has Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome. As well as distinct physical features and organ defects, the condition carries moderate to severe intellectual disability, meaning he requires “a high level of care to participate in day-to-day life”, says dad David.

Through their weekly 30-minute speech, language and reading sessions, which began in 2017, they have been able to achieve a marked improvement in Hayden’s verbal communication, making it easier to understand what he was trying to say and reducing the frustration he often feels in his interactions.

A bonus is that Hayden, who is often reluctant to do the things he doesn’t want to do (like go to school), “absolutely loves his time at Ru’s” and is excited about their visits, says David. “Ruth made a connection with him right from the get-go; there aren’t too many therapists who have been able to do this well. She’s also

been amazing with advice and teaching us techniques to reinforce at home what he learns in the lesson. This has given us some wonderful experiences with Hayden, as he is better able to communicate his thoughts to us.”

Her secret? “I don’t believe in forcing children to do anything they’re not intellectually or physically able to do. The general issue with the school system is that children who have a learning deficit or disability are forced to meet standards they can’t meet and it impacts them emotionally. I look at where they are developmentally and will go in at that level.”

Her passion for working with kids began when she was one herself – in the shearing shed on the farm, where she’d play for hours with her sister, ‘teaching’ her stuffed toys. Ruth says she also engaged in plenty of physical activity: “There were a lot of places to move – shearing sheds to climb in, bush to run through – and sensory experiences.” With bark, sand,

leaves and mud collected from the dam as learning tools, the bush (“a sensory-motor paradise”) proved the best classroom for a child with incurable cystic fibrosis.

Her upbringing, marred as it was by illness, reflects her own teaching practice, which is grounded in child development theory and Maria Montessori’s philosophy that the years between zero and six are the crucial formative period of a person’s life. “The magic happens in the first six years,” says Ruth, when a little human’s personality and IQ are being nurtured. But Ruth, who is studying occupational therapy, says she’s not “a purist Montessorian”. Parents’ fears that their kids will “get lost in the system” means she also does work around standards and helping kids cope in the classroom.

The desire to help others is an ever-present theme in her life: she has written educational aids; set up a charity to raise awareness about organ donation, following her lung transplant in 2012; and has even authored her own short book, *You Always Have a Choice*, to share her personal experiences and assist others heal past hurts. “Everyone has the ability to choose a good life for themselves,” she says. “But they need to think about what their priorities are.

“The most important thing for me is to love and care for other people. I now build my life around my family, which is Kevin, a lovely bunch of friends I adore and the kids I work with. I treat those kids like they are my own.”

As she approaches seven years post-operation – the average life expectancy for a transplant recipient with CF – does she worry about how much time she has left? “I’m generally a very positive person; however, yes, it crosses my mind. But until that day, I will fight tooth and nail to be here.” Somehow, I don’t doubt it, Ruth.

Vanessa Frey

The INClub
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On the radar



The drought is still “biting very hard” in Bangalow’s adopted town.

Bingara’s big dry continues

The 2018 Bangalow Adopts Bingara campaign to assist drought-stricken farmers raised just under a whopping \$65,000, thanks to the well-coordinated efforts of a dedicated group of locals – including Bangalow Chamber of Commerce president Jo Millar, Lisa Laing and Donna Jarrett, who helped organise stockfeed and transport – and the generosity of 2479 residents. “I am very proud to be part of this community, which is lightweight in terms of size but heavyweight in terms of heart,” says Jo. “For a rural community struggling with drought, knowing that people care makes a difference.”

The proceeds bought 944 large round bales of hay, 1207 20-kilogram bags of calf pellets and 35 tonnes of molasses to help Bingara farmers feed their livestock

and horses. Anne Thompson’s North Coast Drought Appeal also sent more than 240 food hampers and care packages to the picturesque town in the state’s New England region. In addition to the \$50,000 transport subsidy received from the Rural Assistance Authority, about \$23,000 of the \$47,000 collected by the Bangalow Hotel at a dinner in October, and other fundraising activities, was donated to the Bingara Lions Club. The Lions are distributing the money to farming families in the form of \$150 vouchers as a “psychological and morale

booster”, says club president Ian Grieve. “It’s a little extra they can spend when they normally wouldn’t have it.”

Although the town has received some light rain, the effects of the drought are still being felt and Bingara’s pain is not over yet. “We are really feeling it now; the drought is biting very hard. I’ve never seen anything like it,” says Ian, who has lived on Netherby-Grange, a property 10 kilometres from Bingara, for 60 years. Farmers are running out of water and destocking continues, with 50 per cent of animals sold off, he estimates.

Medical cannabis farm

Byron Shire Council is assessing a \$7.2 million development application to repurpose a poultry farm on Friday Hut Road, Binna Burra, as a medical cannabis agribusiness. The application proposes replacing three disused poultry sheds with new sheds, loading facilities, greenhouses and worker facilities to a total of approximately 3440 square metres (nine per cent of the site and within the current footprint). The proposal

anticipates employing 16 staff and aims to grow, cultivate, process and produce an anticipated two to five tonnes of medical cannabis a year. The DA estimates the development will add 44 light car movements a day, mostly associated with staff vehicle trips.

New visitor guide

Visitors (and locals) can now pick up the 2019 edition of Bangalow’s free guide from the local newsagent. This



4th Sunday of each month

Supporting the Bangalow Community for 30 years ■ Supporting The Bangalow Herald

stylish annual publication, produced by the Chamber of Commerce, focuses on some of the highlights of the village – from eateries and homewares stores to the personalities who make Bangalow a special place. It includes features on Ninbella gallery owner Grant Rasheed, local artist Niah McLeod and shoemaker Rachel Ayland, as well as guides on where to get fit and well, buy a gift, dine out, discover great fashion and rent or buy a home. There's also an events calendar and a listing of local markets.

Childcare facility proposed

Mirabelle Early Learning Centre Pty Ltd has submitted a 'change of use' development application to Byron Shire Council for the old Bangalow Community Health Centre on Granuaille Road. The proposed facility (open between 7am and 6pm, Monday to Friday) would provide care for 59 children aged six months to five years. The DA includes internal alterations to the existing building, as well as new decks and outdoor play areas to the rear. Car parking spaces would be increased from 12 to 17, including a space for disabled drivers. A drive-through porte-cochère will provide a safe drop-off and collection point. The accompanying noise-assessment report recommends a solid, high boundary fence to abate traffic noise from the main road. The public exhibition of this DA is now closed.

Are you recycling right?

In case you missed Byron Shire Council's announcement before Christmas, we all need to change our recycling practices. Soft plastics – like cling wrap, chip packets or bread bags – can no longer go into the yellow recycling bins (even if there are symbols on packaging), but they can still



Bangalow's pride and joy: congratulations to Sybil Johnston, Senior Citizen of the Year (left), and Lynn Smith, Volunteer of the Year, who received well-earned accolades at Byron Shire's Australia Day celebrations.
Photo: Terry Bleakley

be recycled via the collection bins outside Coles and Woolworths supermarkets. Takeaway cups, meat or biscuit trays and anything smaller than a credit card can't be recycled, either. All items should be rinsed or wiped clean, with lids removed and placed in the red landfill bin. And don't bag, box or contain your recyclables – leave them loose. Go to byron.nsw.gov.au for more information about the new Recycle Right program.

Shutting up shops

Angel and Oliver Bikoumou are relocating their iconic Choux Choux Patisserie to River Street in Ballina. High rent and less through-traffic since the new motorway opened has forced the move. The Ballina outlet will open soon (taking over The Hardwood cafe site

near the RSL club) and both patisseries will keep trading until the Bangalow business is sold. The baking operations will also continue in Bangalow until then. Along with the departure of furniture and interiors store Hendrix & Harlow last month, Choux Choux's imminent closure is another ominous sign of the town's struggling retail sector.

Thank you, Quilters

The Bangalow Herald is deeply touched to have received a generous donation from the Bangalow Quilters. We take pride in supporting community groups and, as a not-for-profit organisation, are most grateful for gestures such as these.

Jenny Bird, Vanessa Frey, Murray Hand and Stephanie King

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Fernleigh's blackboard message typifies the can-do attitude of the shire's local public schools – regardless of their size. Photo: Mike Frey

Back to school!

What's in store for the classes of 2019? Here's our year in review.

The seismic shift in household routines that occurs at the beginning of the school year began to make itself felt on 30 January. This week, children are squeezing themselves into stiff new uniforms, including – horrors! – shoes and socks, after the summer's idyll, and shouldering cumbersome backpacks, some almost as big as the kids themselves. Meanwhile, teachers are bracing for the classroom onslaught and myriad challenges the school year will bring. And long-suffering bus drivers will grit their teeth as, yet again, they find cars parked in their designated stops.

Nearly 600 children of primary-school age will head into the half-dozen public schools

in and around Bangalow – more than half of them to the school in the middle of town, which has been providing education to the community since 1884. Acting principal Larissa Polak will continue to focus on the "three Rs" (reading, writing and arithmetic) while maintaining the school's reputation for providing a "holistic journey through education", says P&C president Drew Paice. The construction of a bush tucker garden last year demonstrated its commitment to sustainability and the environment, while it also led the way with accreditation in the Healthy School Canteens policy.

A projected 120 children will attend Coorabell Public School – including some

from Bangalow, which is outside the school's zone but selected by parents for a range of reasons, including its size and "country feel". However, 2019 marks the end of an era for such admissions at the school, following some years of controversy around zonings and enrolments and a move by the NSW Department of Education (DoE) to enforce such zones. For the first time in a long while, no additional out-of-zone students will enrol at the school in 2019, except for those with siblings who are already enrolled.

"This year marks the end of the period of transition to compliance agreed in 2017 for Coorabell Public School, whose preferred enrolment ceiling is now 95," said a DoE spokesperson. "It is expected that in coming years the school's enrolments will move down towards the preferred ceiling as the number of out-of-zone students without

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siblings at the school reduces.” The move was not welcomed by the Coorabell P&C, which has said that enforcing the zone and “permanent classroom” rule – that threatened to cut its population from more than 130 to 47 – would spell the school’s “demise”.

Parents understandably feel as if the future of the school is balancing on a knife edge, with no certainty about enrolment or staff numbers, or even the number of available classrooms, until the school year has begun.

In August 2017, the department said the continued acceptance of non-local enrolments at Coorabell (100 students at that time) was having a detrimental effect on neighbouring small schools such as Eureka and Goonengerry and proving too costly. The two smaller schools, with steady populations in the mid-30s, have been frustrated by the migration of pupils to Coorabell from their zones, including from the village of Federal.

One consequence for them is that privacy legislation requirements for the low numbers of years 3 and 5 pupils sitting NAPLAN tests mean the schools are unable to report their results – despite they, and neighbouring Rosebank, at times having some of the best in the region. Goonengerry Public School has a long-held reputation for excellence in arts and crafts, says principal Tracey Barnes, but it’s also excelling at both literacy and numeracy – a fact that goes unpublished.

A few years ago, low numbers applying for enrolment at Newrybar caused concern about the school’s future, but that seems a thing of the past. With nine new Kindergarten kids, an influx in other grades and three permanent teaching positions, the school could accommodate 60 children. Instead it has chosen to apply its own ceiling of 44 and stay at two classes, maintaining an intimate country-school feel.

At Fernleigh, where the roll dipped to 19 several years ago but has been stable for the past four years, 11 Kindy kids joined the school this year to take the number up to 35. Rachael McClymont has been made a permanent teacher and says the steady enrolment growth is due to local families seeking a place there – a reflection of the faith that the community has in the school.

That faith is perhaps evidence of what Eureka Public School’s outgoing principal, Mike Coleman (see story at right), praised as the great privilege of excellent public education available to every child – and free, to boot.

Digby Hildreth



Eureka students with their principal. Photo: courtesy of Eureka Public School

Mr Coleman moves on

The much-loved outgoing principal of Eureka Public School has accepted a new position at Dareton Public School, more than 1000 kilometres west of Sydney, where Indigenous children make up 95 per cent of the roll. Over the past eight years, Mike Coleman lifted student results across all subjects and transformed the look and feel of its classrooms, buildings and grounds. He also gave tirelessly of his time, managing and leading local events such as the Lismore Lantern Parade Fiery Finale, Lismore Performing Arts Festival and Bangalow Theatre Company. Mike, who will be relieved by Bill Dempster, said Eureka was “a proud small public school with a big heart and a focus on community, student wellbeing and excellence in teaching and learning”. We wish him the best of luck.



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William Potanin and Sophia Honey with their Bangalow Show entries (left); Lily Spiteri's artwork (below) won first prize at the Show. Photo: Judy Baker

to find the relics, including varyingly shaped bottles dating back to 1918, hidden beneath their home's floor. The property was one of the original dairies in the area, owned by the Noble family. William's sculpture was awarded Show Theme Open Champion Exhibit and will proudly adorn the walls of the newly renovated home – the perfect housewarming gift.

Sophia Honey also collected a swag of awards for her exquisite artworks, including rosettes for Open Craft, Intermediate Art and Show Theme Challenge. Her work – which drew admiration from seasoned stewards amazed by a skill that belies her

Beyond the Pavilion

Two prize-winning creative kids on the method behind their artistic practice.

Marin Simpson looked on intrigued as 14-year-old neighbour William Potanin rifled through a box of salvaged scrap items and started "doodling" to create images. "It was such an organic creative process," says Marin.

Last year, the Byron High School student's Year 8 art subjects included sculpture. "William is a very thoughtful artist, becoming totally absorbed in the process of creating," says teacher Margo Simpson, who has worked with him in both primary and high school.

While his brothers have been busy attending various sports and other activities



over the years, William has – from a young age – always requested art classes, says his father, Fletcher. He doesn't read in bed; he sketches.

12 years – has featured on posters for Bangalow Primary School's art show and the cover of the student magazine.

Sophia is always drawing, honing her skills with pencils and watercolours, but she's also starting to experiment with more challenging mediums like paint, charcoal and pastels – her award-winning chicken was painted in acrylics. Margo, who has also taught Sophia, says she has a natural feel for the artistic process, with "an observational eye and sophisticated understanding and use of materials well beyond her years". She regularly incorporates natural elements into her work, inspired by Frida Kahlo's use of nature, flowers and animals.

For more inspiration, these two budding artists can look to fellow local Lily Spiteri, who also exhibited works at the 2018 Bangalow Show. Last year, the 17-year-old was accepted into the school-holiday art program at Sydney's National Art School and successfully completed HSC art as an accelerated student.

She creates original digital and animated pieces using sophisticated computer programs and her online presence (@lily.spiteri.art) is leading to publishing opportunities. "I'm excited to see what these kids can do," says Margo.

Rebecca Sargeant

SUDOKION

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Transport of the future

In December, the SolarTuk Expedition rolled into Byron Shire at a top speed of 50 kilometres per hour en route from Melbourne to Cairns for a whirlwind 24-hour tour. Headed by electrical and telecommunications engineer Julian O'Shea, the team's mission was to "promote sustainable transport and a low-carbon future".

On a visit to an autorickshaw factory in Thailand early last year, Julian snapped up a second-hand motorised tricycle for \$10,000 and, later, a second-hand lithium-ion Tesla battery for about \$5000. Back in Melbourne, a group of 11 engineering students from RMIT was enlisted to re-engineer those components into a three-wheeled, photovoltaic solar-powered electric vehicle with a range of more than 300 kilometres per charge.

Julian and Jack described the project as "a way to highlight the impact of GHG emissions from transport – a sector that has largely flown under the radar in Australian media and politics compared with electricity. As the third-largest – and growing – source of emissions in Australia, we can't afford to ignore it any longer. Transitioning to an electric transport system powered by renewable energy sources is a critical part of Australia reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and we hope the SolarTuk Expedition (solartuk.org) will help inspire our businesses, communities and government to start making the change."

This year, the plan is to tour the tuktuk around South-East Asia to prove that autorickshaws don't need to be diesel-guzzling, fume-generating, dirty and noisy but could easily become the vehicle of choice for a sustainable transport future.

Christobel Munson

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The butterfly effect

Turn your garden into a habitat for a beautiful winged insect with jewel-like colours.

The Richmond birdwing butterfly vine (*Pararistolochia praevenosa*) was originally common from Maryborough in Queensland to NSW's Grafton, with a small patch in the Atherton Tablelands.

The vine, endemic to lowland subtropical rainforest, can become a liana with very woody stems but is now rare in the wild due to clearing, burning and other disturbance of its rainforest habitat.

This vine is the primary food plant in the larval stages of the Richmond birdwing, a rare butterfly classified as vulnerable. Female birdwings are attracted to shaded or semi-shaded vines with soft leaves and will avoid depositing eggs on vines exposed to full sunlight. Lightly pruning the tops of vines to produce plenty of low, soft green leaves can encourage the new growth to emerge from stems – the type of foliage where the birdwing likes to lay her eggs.



The Richmond birdwing butterfly lays her eggs on local species *Pararistolochia praevenosa* (top); the imported Dutchman's pipe (bottom) is toxic to larvae. Photo (left): Judy Baker

Pararistolochia praevenosa prefers well-drained, moist, nutrient-rich soils – not too acidic (pH 6.5-6.8) – and semi-shaded positions. Its roots are very sensitive to prolonged drought and will die if the surrounding soil dries out. Always plant the vines more than a metre from the base of a tree to prevent competition for moisture.

They can be grown on fences or trellises with several other species of native companion vines but not vigorous or competitive species. Vines should be at least two years old and climbing a stake before planting. They do well

in large tubs, trained up long stakes or frames. Try to avoid relocating mature vines, as damage to roots invariably results in losses.

The Richmond birdwing vine should not be confused with South America's *Aristolochia elegans*, or Dutchman's pipe, which smells the same but is poisonous to the larvae and has contributed to the decline of this once-common butterfly. This imported variety should be removed and replaced with the native vine.

Liz Gander
The butterfly vine is available from Ragged Blossom Native Nursery in Bangalow.



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This performance is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

Mediterranean vegan wraps

School lunches are in the bag with this healthy vegie-packed wrap – just don't forget the fruit!

My memories of school lunches consist of white-bread sandwiches with peanut butter or, for a bit of variety, Vegemite. My husband's had banana sprinkled with sugar! Wrapped in greaseproof paper and placed in a paper bag with a piece of fresh fruit – if you were lucky (depending on what day of the week it was). What a treat to have a freshly cut salad sandwich and a cream bun when Mum was on canteen duty. And there was no little Tetra Pak of juice or milk – just water from the bubbler when you needed it.

Convenience has come at a price. Plastic is polluting our environment and the mantra is now "reduce, reuse and recycle" to cut down on waste. Instead of greaseproof paper, we can opt for multi-use waxed wraps, non-plastic lunch bags and bento boxes.

This vegan wrap will satisfy the hungriest kids – it's filling, healthy, super-tasty and I promise students will not fall asleep at their desk after lunch (unless you also pack leftover pasta).

Lyn Hand

Ingredients

1 medium cucumber
 ½ teaspoon salt, plus a couple of extra pinches
 1 medium tomato, diced
 ¼ red onion, diced
 ¼ green capsicum, diced
 4 tbsp chopped kalamata olives
 1 tin chickpeas
 200g vegan yoghurt (or regular if non-vegan)
 2 tbsp chopped dill
 1 clove garlic, minced
 2 tbsp lemon juice
 Pepper, to taste
 2 cups chopped lettuce
 4 large tortillas

Method

1. Grate half the cucumber and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Place it in a strainer over a bowl and leave it to drain while you dice the remaining cucumber and chop all the vegies. Combine the diced cucumber, tomato, onion, capsicum and olives and set aside.
2. Drain and rinse chickpeas, then place in a bowl. Smash them with a fork or your hands.
3. To make the tzatziki, squeeze as much water out of the grated cucumber as possible. In a separate bowl, combine the grated cucumber, yoghurt, dill, garlic, lemon juice, a pinch of salt and pepper.
4. Add 3 tablespoons of this tzatziki to the smashed chickpeas, along with ½ teaspoon of salt and pepper. Mix well.
5. Assemble the wraps by placing lettuce, smashed chickpeas, mixed diced vegetables and a few dollops of tzatziki on each tortilla, ensuring you divide the quantities evenly.

Makes 4.
 Recipe courtesy of The Stingy Vegan (thestingyvegan.com).

Illustration: Lyn Hand



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How religious are we?

Congregations may be shrinking but spirituality is still strong in the Shire.
Jenny Bird on God and godlessness.

"Godlessness is expanding," said demographer Bernard Salt in *The Australian*, reporting on the religion-related statistics in the 2016 Census. Between 2001 and 2016, the number of Australians claiming no religious affiliation nearly doubled from 15.5 to 29.9 per cent.

Godlessness in Bangalow was already well above the national average back in 2001, but by 2016 it had doubled to a whopping 49 per cent. These figures suggest the town is an unusually godless pocket when compared with the country as a whole. In fact, 46.7 per cent of Byron Shire residents ticked the 'no religion' box in the 2016 Census.

The reason for this is unclear, but international studies suggest that inverse links can be drawn between rates

of belief and both socio-economic status and educational attainment. The more well-off and educated you are, the less likely it is that you will believe – and Bangalow is above the national average on both counts.

In his book, *Beyond Belief*, social researcher Hugh Mackay describes a trend away from organised religion in Australia, where more people are identifying as 'spiritual' rather than 'religious'. The well-stocked spiritual supermarket that is Byron Shire may typify this trend and help explain its higher-than-average 'no religion' data.

Father David Gilbey, from St Kevin's Church, observes that "numbers [in the Catholic Church] are going down all the time and the congregation is ageing". He believes that "within us there is a need, a desire, to touch our spirituality, but the Church needs to reassess some of its traditions and culture. Society has changed and our sense of spirituality has moved on from the old supernatural understanding."

Places of worship

The places of worship speak to Bangalow's settlement history, starting with the Catholic church built in 1894 on Lismore Road on land donated by Robert Campbell, an Irish Catholic immigrant and perhaps the town's first developer. Made from local teak, the little church was moved in 1908 by bullock team to its current location in Deacon Street. It was used as a church and school until the Romanesque brick building was erected in 1935 in what was the cemetery. All graves were transferred to the present cemetery.

Three small timber churches were added during the early 1900s. The first Anglican church, built on Clover Hill in 1903, was relocated to Ashton Street in 1910.



The Anglican church is relocated by bullock team in 1910. Photo courtesy of Bangalow Historical Society

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Bangalow by religion	
No religion	49%
Roman Catholic	15.7%
Anglican	10.7
Presbyterian/Reformed	3.4%
Uniting Church	2.3%
Buddhist	1.9%
Pentecostal	1.4%
Sikhism	0.7%
Christian	0.6%
Not stated	10.8%

Source: 2016 Census

The brick All Souls' Memorial Church we see today was constructed in 1928, when the old church became the church hall until it was demolished in 1966. The current Anglican ministry also includes the church in Eureka. The original 1910 Methodist church in Station Street collapsed in a cyclone and was rebuilt on its current site in 1914. The timber Presbyterian church in Byron Street still stands in its original location, while the Sikh temple on Ballina Road is the newest and fifth place of worship in Bangalow. Built in 2004 by the local Sikh community, it is one of only a handful of Sikh temples in regional Australia.

21st-century ministry

Bangalow's organised religions work hard to maintain their congregations and social relevance, sometimes putting them at odds with their own church hierarchies. They espouse the values of love, tolerance and inclusion regardless of age, sexual orientation, race or religion. "If what we do doesn't advance that, then we've got a problem," according to the Anglican Church's Fr Matthew Smedley. "That's really what we are on about."

And Dave Eastwell, elder of the Presbyterian Church, says, "I see myself less as a Presbyterian than a Christian and believe that it is important to connect with other Christians to demonstrate love and tolerance."

Both the Uniting and Anglican ministers support same-gender marriage but cannot, at this point in time, marry a same-gender couple in their churches. Says Fr Matthew, "While we do not share the strict views about sexuality that other Anglican dioceses do, unfortunately, we are unable to conduct same-sex marriages yet, as the Anglican Church of Australia has not approved a service."

Pastor Phil and Rev. Greer Dokmanovic, from the Uniting Church, also support same-gender marriages and can perform this service outside the church. The Uniting Church in Australia has approved same-gender marriages, leaving it to individual churches to decide whether to conduct them, while Catholic priest Fr Gilbey says, "we can't even go there".

Bangalow's Anglican and Uniting churches have a strong focus on social justice. The Uniting Church prides itself on being the main driver behind the town's Fairtrade initiative and opens its doors for AA meetings, choir practice and men's cooking classes.

The Anglican Church is closely connected with The Buttery, a not-for-profit rehabilitation centre in Binna Burra whose residents can attend Sunday-morning worship. The congregation is also heavily involved in refugee activism, particularly offshore detention and children. They contribute to the financial support of refugees on Manus Island and are also working towards a small social-housing project in Bangalow.

Meanwhile, the Sikh temple is growing along with the district's Sikh community. On the third Sunday of every month, more than 100 people gather for worship, followed by a communal vegetarian lunch. "The service is an opportunity to pray for everyone, for good health, for truthfulness," explains Jagdish Singh. The temple is also open every day for individual prayer.

Despite our relative godlessness, the religious communities of Bangalow play a significant role in the local community as well as broader social justice movements. They are part of the warp and weft of the social fabric of the town and contribute in many ways to our community's social cohesion.



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BOOK REVIEW

The Kinship of Secrets by Eugenia Kim

A captivating and moving story about separation caused by Calvin Cho's decision to move his family to the United States. Unsure of the challenges that might lie ahead, Calvin and his wife, Najin, decide to leave one of their daughters in South Korea in the care of her maternal grandparents and an uncle. Shortly after leaving, the Korean War breaks out and the separation becomes much longer than anyone anticipated.



The sisters tell their story in alternate chapters. Miran, who grows up in modern America and regularly attends meetings with her parents to educate about and garner support for South Korean refugees, lives in the shadow of the sibling who was left behind and has created a huge hole in her mother's heart. She is a determined and wayward teenager by the time she is finally reunited with her sister and has to find a way to navigate this new relationship.

Inja, meanwhile, is being raised and supported by a loving surrogate family who are coping as best they can in the war-torn country while remaining true to their Korean culture and sharing the folklore of generations past. Each month, they eagerly anticipate the arrival of survival parcels from Inja's US-based parents. As the years roll on, always with the anticipation of a reunion with the family she does not know, we share Inja's anxiety about her uncertain future and the sense of loss she'll feel when the time comes to leave the extended family who have come to adore her.

An important footnote reveals that the novel is loosely based on the author's own experience of moving to the US with her parents as a young child and leaving behind a younger sister. It is beautifully written, with fascinating historical insight into the war and Korean folklore. Highly recommended.

Carolyn Adams

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Part-time position with remuneration, based in 2479 postcode.

Would you like to contribute to the 2479 community?

Have you worked in journalism/publishing or would like to further develop skills in this field?

Are you a team player happy to work with volunteer contributors?

Contact Jenny
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Locals love...

George Singh's beautiful blooms

On his seven-hectare property in nearby Tintenbar, Bangalow-born farmer George Singh grows carnations, chrysanthemums, snapdragons, statice, stocks and roses. But his specialty is the "fashion flower" gerbera, a native of South Africa. Most of George's fresh-cut flowers – grown under cover in a large hothouse where watering, fertilising and temperature are controlled automatically by computer – have a season of nine to 12 months, so he's kept busy cultivating, cutting and selling all year round. Look for him on Saturday mornings at the Bangalow Market, where his colourful blossoms will brighten your day.

Helen Johnston



Gerberas (right) are an instant pop of colour. Photo: Ian Lacey



Scandi fiddlers Fru Skagerrak (left) and Melbourne-based rocker Liam Gerner. Photos courtesy of the Festival of Small Halls



Tour de force

The travelling Small Halls fest makes a big stop in Eureka.

The hinterland village of Eureka is in for a treat when the Festival of Small Halls pays a visit. The peripatetic event will introduce two acts that were big hits at the recent Woodford Folk Festival: Scandinavian fiddle trio Fru Skagerrak and Melbourne-based country rocker Liam Gerner. They will appear separately, then perform together, combining the women's rousing Nordic folk with Gerner's rough-hewn rock stoicism.

The musical collaboration brought tears to the eyes of Small Halls producer Eleanor Rigden when she heard them play at Woodford. "That was an improvised gig at the end of the festival," she says. "Imagine how they'll sound after touring together for five weeks."

Gerner, whose background is steeped in blues and country music, has supported such luminaries as Paul Weller, Jason Isbell and the Drive-by Truckers. The recently released Liam Gerner and the Sunset Pushers (his band of Melbourne musos) is an album of "sweating, raw roots rock 'n' roll" – in contrast to the fjord-fresh country harmonies and violin interplay of the fiddlers.

Bangalow women's choir The Material Girls will perform in support and 2479 resident and bush poet Angus Thurgate will MC the event. The Festival of Small Halls has been touring eastern states since 2013 and just keeps getting bigger, seeking out more and more venues that are central to their communities. Bangalow also qualifies, says Eleanor, and festival organisers would love to bring a show to the A&I Hall.

The family-friendly concert will be held at Eureka Hall on 2 February at 6.30pm. Go to festivalofsmallhalls.com for tickets (drinks and a paella dinner are available at extra cost).

Digby Hildreth



Strings attached

The Australian Haydn Ensemble brings the compositions of the early music masters to the A&I Hall – played in four perfect parts.

Northern Rivers-raised musician Skye McIntosh (left) returns to the region next month with the Australian Haydn Ensemble to perform works by Haydn, Mozart and Boccherini.

The violinist and artistic director of the ensemble – Australia's leading early music group – will also conduct workshops with local string students and teachers and perform several school concerts. Skye says she is delighted to be coming home: "Having grown up in the area, it is something I have always wanted to do."

The ensemble is renowned for its exploration of both the well-loved and lesser-known repertoire of the Late Baroque and Early Classical periods on historical instruments. Its program brings together three virtuosic works for string quartet, opening with one of Boccherini's 'miniature' works. It will be followed by Mozart's beautiful and dark quartet in D minor – one of six he dedicated to Haydn, his dear friend – and conclude with Haydn's work of genius, the String Quartet Op. 76 No. 4 (*Sunrise*), whose opening bars evoke the image of daybreak.

The concert will be held at the A&I Hall in Bangalow on Sunday, 3 March at 3pm and tickets are available from australianhaydn.com.au

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ADFAS	John	0438 778 055
Al-Anon (2pm Fri)		1300 252 666
Bangalow Koalas	Linda	0411 491 991
Bridge	Dennis	6687 1574
Chamber of Commerce		admin@bangalow.biz
Community Children's Centre	Kerry	6687 1552
Co-dependents Anonymous	Gye	0421 583 321
CWA (Wed)	Di	6685 4694
Garden Club (1st Wed)	Helen	0438 194 106
George the snake man	George	0407 965 092
Historical Society/Museum/Cafe		6687 2183
Koala rescue line (24 hr)		6622 1233
Land & Rivercare (8.30am Sat)	Liz	6687 1309
Lions Club (7pm 2nd/4th Tues)	Chris	0416 005 700
Market (4th Sun)	Jeff	6687 1911
Men's Shed	Brian	0413 679 201
Op Shop (9.30am-2.30pm, Sat 9.30am-12.30pm)		6687 2228
Parklands	Lynn	0429 644 659
Park Trust Committee	Jan	6684 7214
Police	Peta	6687 1404
Pool Trust	Jo	6687 1297
Progress Association	Ian	0414 959 936
Poultry Club	Hector	6687 1322
Quilters (2nd/4th Thur)	Helen	6684 1161
Red Cross (1st Fri)	Liz	6687 1195
Scouts (6.15pm Tues)	Jim	0408 546 522
Show Society	Melissa	6687 1033

Sport

Bowls men (1pm Wed & Sat)	Gerry	6687 1142
Bowls women (9.30am Wed)	Dot	6687 1246
Cricket	Anthony	0429 306 529
Netball (3.30pm Wed)	Ellie	0429 855 399
Rugby Union (Rebels)	Dave	0412 080 614
Soccer (Bluedogs)		0434 559 700
Tennis court hire	Denise	0409 579 231

Venues

A&I Hall	Brian	0427 157 565
All Souls' Anglican Hall	Matthew	0488 561 539
Bowling Club	Shane	6687 2741
Coorabell Hall	Ouida	6687 1307
Heritage House		6687 2183
Moller Pavilion	Karina	6687 1035
Newrybar Hall	Katrina	0410 975 572
RSL Hall	Charlotte	6687 2828
Scout Hall	Karen	0400 591 719
St Kevin's Catholic Hall	Russell	0423 089 684



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Yogalates Gentle 4.30-5.30pm
Wed Barre Fusion 9.15 - 10.15am & Yin Yoga 6 - 7.15pm
Thurs Yogalates 9.30 - 11am & Gentle Vinyasa 5.30 - 6.45pm
Fri Barre Fusion 6.30 - 7.30 am
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Check out the latest happenings in and around town.

Men's Cooking Class

When Fri 1 February, 10am

Where Bangalow Uniting Church

Contact Brian 0466 339 702

Men of any age can learn culinary skills with experienced chef Brian and then socialise while eating the fruits of their labour. A donation of \$5 or more to keep the class viable. Call Brian or just turn up.

Festival of Small Halls: Eureka

When Sat 2 February, 6pm
paella for 7pm show

Where Eureka Hall, corner Eureka Road and Federal Drive

Tickets festivalofsmallhalls.com or contact Marin 0413 468 889

Woodfordia (organiser of the Mullum Music and Woodford Folk festivals) brings its folk and contemporary music tour to Eureka Hall, featuring blues and country artist Liam Gerner and Scandi trio Fru Skagerrak. Bangalow bush poet Angus Thurgate will MC the event.

Bangalow Garden Club

When Wed 6 February, 1.30pm

Where Moller Pavilion, Bangalow

Contact Annie 0417 636 011 or anne.abbink@yahoo.com.au

Broni Carthew from Ab Fab Plants will give a talk on landscaping for courtyards and smaller gardens. Please bring along your \$15 annual membership fee and a mug for afternoon tea. On Saturday 16 February, Don and Jessica will open their garden in Eureka for members (details to come at the meeting).

Bangalow Networking Breakfast

When Thurs 14 Feb, 7.45-9am

Where Town Restaurant & Cafe, Bangalow

Contact Rosemarie 0412 475 543 (bookings essential)

Want to understand your Apple computer's ecosystem and learn more about computing safety? Shane Robins from Mullum Mac – the only authorised Apple reseller in the Byron Shire – shares how to secure your data, be safe online and enjoy your computing experience.

Bangalow Quilters

When Thurs 14 and 28, 9.30am-12.30pm

Where All Souls' Anglican Church Hall, Bangalow

Contact Elizabeth 0409 599 835



Greens campaign launch

When Fri 22 February, 6pm

Where A&I Hall, Bangalow

Contact Jacob 0428 837 292

Join Greens icon Bob Brown (above) when he officially launches the state election campaigns for Tamara Smith and Sue Higginson, the Greens candidates for Ballina and Lismore. The Greens will present their vision for the Northern Rivers – a thriving region with a healthy environment and state representatives who will serve the community instead of corporations. Gold-coin donation at the door. *Photo courtesy of the Bob Brown Foundation*

Help with patchwork/quilting/craft available. Morning tea is provided. Visitors are welcome.

Brian 0413 079 201 or David 0403 899 225 or email bangalowmensshed@gmail.com

Bangalow Men's Shed AGM

When Fri 15 February, 4pm

Where Men's Shed, Bangalow

Contact Andy 0438 243 666,

All members of the Bangalow community are invited to the AGM. Annual subscriptions are now due for members. Weekly activities include art classes,

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woodwork workshops, an exercise group and a blues jam session. New activities scheduled for 2019 include a metalwork workshop, nursery/greenhouse, computer classes, photography and an extensive project to landscape and beautify the site, located in Station Street.

Bangalow Koalas planting

When Sat 23 February, 9am start
Where 990 Friday Hut Road, Binna Burra
Contact Linda twodogsmedia@optusnet.com.au

The aim is to plant 960 koala and rainforest trees on this first planting for 2019. There'll be a free sausage sizzle, courtesy of the Lions Club.

Australian Haydn Ensemble

When Sun 3 March, 3pm
Where A&I Hall, Bangalow
Tickets \$30-\$45; australianhaydn.com.au or 1800 334 388

Don't miss an afternoon of Mozart, Haydn and Boccherini performed on magnificent period instruments by this leading Australian early music ensemble.



The Australian Haydn Ensemble will fill the A&I Hall with beautiful music by composers from the Early Classical period. Photo courtesy of AHE

February diary

- 1 Men's Cooking Class**
- 2 Festival of Small Halls: Eureka**
- 6 Bangalow Garden Club**
- 14 Bangalow Networking Breakfast**
- 14, 28 Bangalow Quilters**
- 15 Bangalow Men's Shed AGM**
- 16 Garden Club Saturday Visit**
- 22 Greens campaign launch**
- 23 Bangalow Koalas planting**
- 24 Bangalow Market**
- March 3 Australian Haydn Ensemble**
- Deadlines for March 2019 issue:**
- Advertising** Fri 8 March
- Copy** Tues 12 March

SUDOKION Solution	4	5	2	7	9	3	6	8	1
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Love potion

Here's how to mix Butcher Baker's Be My ValenThyme limited-edition cocktail...

Ingredients

45ml Absolut Vodka
30ml blueberry-and-thyme-infused syrup
30ml lime juice
25ml sugar syrup

Method

Shake ingredients with ice, strain into a martini glass and garnish with fresh blueberries threaded onto a sprig of thyme – then let the magic happen!

Photo: Mike Frey

Crazy, stupid love

Is it possible to celebrate Valentine's Day without the gimmicks? **Hannah Fewson** thinks so.

As 14 February fast approaches, we will all no doubt be hearing mutterings of either excitement or disgust from friends and family about Cupid's contentious holiday. Whether you deem Valentine's Day cute, culturally irrelevant or a capitalist gimmick, according to one source, Australians spent \$253 million on crushes, husbands, wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, partners and secret loves in 2017.

In the early days of my relationship, when surprise gifts and love notes were frequent and a matter of course, my fiancé and I were solidly in the camp that shrugged off Valentine's Day as ridiculous. Now, however, after a handful of joyful years and the day-to-day of work and routine, the energy we both invest in showing each other our gratitude and love has inevitably dwindled, so a

specific day on the calendar to remind us to tend our relationship, I think, is beautiful.

Although my letterbox and Instagram are already full of (mostly expensive) marketing suggestions on how to woo my beau, I'm here to suggest that Valentine's Day can be done on the cheap, sustainably and locally. If you choose to engage, let's lay out some options that will support small business, make the missus or mr happy and won't break the bank.

My favourite date night, hands down, is a night in – but with the special touches we often don't bother with on a normal evening. Care and effort are the only things that matter and these can be applied to anything: put on a song with meaning for you both; set the table and use the nice glassware, make dessert or a cocktail. Nothing says romance

like a long, luxurious bath – and Byron Bay Bath Bombs (available at the monthly Bangalow Market) are all handmade with natural ingredients and can make one extra-special. A picnic for two on the beach, with local produce from Harvest's deli in Newrybar, is sure to delight. Or new couples might like to try a fun activity like a sensuous pottery class with Zani McEnnally at The Clay Barn in Bangalow – and go home with a thrown ceramic.

Clearly, I am of the opinion that a non-denominational holiday about love leaves little to object to. And while one can always grumble about 'Americanisms', my main gripe is the day's heteronormative slant – but I digress. Whatever you choose to do on this day, a little thought and care goes a long way.



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