

Your Subud Australia August E-News 2008

Please send submissions for the September E-News to Sebastian N by August 31: <sebnich@gmail.com>

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## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

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### GUNNEBAH COUNCIL MEETING

On the 19th and 20th of July, we held our Council meeting at Gunnebah, in Northern New South Wales.

We originally divided the weekend into two parts:

Saturday: A day to elicit ideas towards a shared 10-year vision

Sunday: A full day of Council business agenda.

The Friday night beforehand started with a a sharing session, kicked off by a few people whom I'd heard (after 20+ years) were asking themselves whether Subud was really for them. I thought this was worth hearing. For me, the session went unexpectedly deep, by which I mean this: people seemed to say things they ordinarily wouldn't say; there were long periods of silence. On the other hand, the session also proved to be shaky: some people didn't feel heard, and some voices were shaky in speaking. What stays with me most is people saying that they'd found intimacy in groups outside of Subud, that they'd never found after decades in Subud.

Though at times difficult, I am convinced that this is a direction in which we need to go further: to learn how to really share, to really listen without judgement, and to hide nothing. At best, we're only half way there.

On Saturday, I had expected a standard business-like visioning session. However, it seemed more like a personal development workshop. My buttons were certainly pushed, at certain points. I was outside my comfort zone. Why should envisaging a future ten years from now be quite so potent?

Going in, my metaphor for a vision was this: agree a common destination, get everyone on the same page, and then build a ship that would take us there. But as the day progressed, that changed. I saw that there was no one page, and visions that felt liberating to some, seemed threatening to others; visions that seemed nurturing to some, felt constraining to others. So my metaphor changed from building a ship capable of going in one direction, to building a vessel large enough to contain everyone, just as they are, and could accept some members going due East, while at the same time another were going due West.

For me, that meant a Subud without boundaries — except for those who wanted

boundaries, in which case this Subud also needed to contain places with clear boundaries.

Towards the end, Asariah T — a woman who struck me as having gone well beyond her personal boundaries at various times — composed the first verse of a song, to the tune of John Lennon's "Imagine". We sang it:

IMAGINE...  
Imagine there's no dogma  
I wonder if you can  
No helpers above us  
Beneath us only feet  
Imagine all the people  
Living in their truth  
Oh oh.....  
I want to be a human  
But not the only one  
I wonder if you'll join me  
And we can 'life-exercise' as one

On Sunday: I was amazed at how quickly the agenda filled, and how full the day was. I wonder what we weren't doing all of those years past in which we tried to do make do with a three hour teleconference. I'm convinced that a mid-year face-to-face meeting is essential to keeping up the pace of progress in our community.

Finally: I want to retell a story I read recently in William James' *The Varieties of Religion Experience*, which seems to get a few knowing laughs every time I tell it. It goes like this:

"A story which revivalist preachers often tell is that of a man who found himself at night slipping down the side of a precipice. At last he caught a branch which stopped his fall, and remained clinging to it in misery for hours. But finally his fingers had to loose their hold, and with a despairing farewell to life, he let himself drop. He fell just six inches."

Namaste.

David W  
National Chair

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GUNNEBAH NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING WEEKEND  
REFLECTIONS

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**From Sophia B**

The Visioning Day, facilitated by Marlena and Peter, surfaced lots of differences of opinion about the extent to which Subud needed to free up the way in which it

operates. Some people opted for a much more open approach regarding applicant waiting periods, meditation, yoga and psychotherapy, whereas others held a more traditional view and were more reluctant to approach change quickly. Although these sessions were sometimes painful, they raised healthy discussion and interaction. It was decided that it would not be helpful to try and force some shared vision, but instead for everyone to reflect on their own views and values and on the broad range of views that are held within the Subud Community.

### **From Bavali H**

We progressed many items, supported by two latihans each day, wonderful food, amazingly hot showers and with the relaxation that comes from being away from home and in a comfortable country setting. Thank you to the Gunnebah Team for use of your beautiful venue and for such loving care.

The Mental Health Policy was provisionally passed; the Conflict Resolution Policy has been used in the Groups with positive results and Adelaide South's membership status has been resolved for everyone's greater benefit. Willingness to support change was evident, with acknowledgement that each individual's pace will vary. The Survey was discussed and is now ready for posting and the Subud Australia website has clear direction. Sebastian F gave a SICA power point presentation on current and future plans - a very positive example of what Subud energy can achieve. It was also great to hear more detail about the exciting IDCP Project, presented ably by Sandra B in Renee's absence.

### **From Imron C**

a moment at Gunnebah...

Having traversed the mornings exercises we were poised upon the brink - in the form of a question- 'Looking 10 years into the future what do you see...?'

We broke into small groups outside under the trees. Perhaps it was the now balmy air that blew our sensibilities away, or perhaps it was something added to the morning tea? We were members of long-enough standing, many of notable experience in our organisation; not lightly given to fantasy.

But this was the moment for just that.

With little pause the little vignettes began to flow; the visions.

Like youngsters stumbling upon a dark oak chest in the attic, the lid was tried and opened easily, there was the inevitable fluttering of wings as all the little creatures were out, some stinging, some biting, some cackling and crowing, some running into the bushes, but among them, certainly near the bottom of that box, (which was certainly no other than Pandora's Box itself) was that winged blue fairy, called only 'Hope' in the old tale but in our version called 'Imagine'. and 'Imagine' fluttered into that warm afternoon air, circling above us, hovering for a moment, and then, her eyes bright and flashing, she whispered the unthinkable.

Upon this whisper 'Imagine's' vision began to appear before us, a vision of a Subud freed of all fears and restraints, a 'life exercise' shared freely and openly,

(and this part didnt easily explain itself to us!) a 'life exercise' with little preamble or rules, yet somehow within a network of bonded and caring people, a simple worldwide spread of the essential core experience.

'You are Subud' perhaps is the easiest way to give expression to this vision of an open, released, unconditional spreading of the latihan. "You are Subud. You will be Bapak's replacement. What you decide to do together- that shall be Subud"

My feeling, which I think many might share, is that it all runs back to Judgement. This door will open to us the moment we are released from our own Judgements and judge no more, released from our own fears and fear no more; becoming children; for it would appear that only children can open that Box. And what follows then? what dreams shall come?

#### **From Chad F**

My brief thoughts on Gunnebah:

It was fascinating to be part of a group which challenged its cultural norms and so openly explored a possible future for itself.

Chad

#### **From Elinor M**

I think the moment (from Gunnebah) that sticks with me is the feeling of harmony and peace after the unanimous vote from council members to apologise to the Adelaide South group and hopefully end the rift that has been a sore spot for all of us for quite a while. The other thing I got from that weekend was the benefit to be gained from talking to each other and the great amount of goodwill that exists between us even if we are far apart geographically and as in our case (Darwin) seldom get to see everyone else. Love Elinor

#### **From Mardijah S**

I will always remember the ease and comfort of being with my Subud brothers and sisters in such a beautiful and nurturing place. How we were able to be honest and open and share concerns and navigate through some choppy issues in a supportive environment. It was heartening to have feedback and useful suggestions for the Mental Health Policy and feel we are developing something worthwhile together.

love Mardijah

#### **From Alfiah B**

My best memory was the Saturday session when we listed and aired the beliefs in Subud. That was quite a breakthrough and that simple exercise clarified for me that the latihan is a personal thing and that my responsibility is to follow my own latihan and no-one else is more expert at that than me!

Alfiah B

#### **From Asariah T**

I wrote this song at the end of the Visioning Workshop day. It was a day that was intense as we opened up to express what we found difficult, personally and

collectively, about Subud. That was in the morning. Then, in the balanced format of Marlina's leadership for our visioning journey, the afternoon had us imagine what it could be like 10 years on, if everything we felt that we wanted to see in Subud actually happened. It was lovely because we were asked to enact our desires which we did with great gusto. The energy in the room was fantastic. But the moment we started putting things on the whiteboard later somehow the energy took a dive... and me... I found a large piece of paper and sidled off to a space behind the board where I kept on playing... I had been impressed by what someone, I think David... ? had said when we started writing on the board - that Imagine by John Lennon was the apt song for this time. So I sat on the floor, thick blue texta in my hand and wrote the first verse. Later, when we were all sitting, cosied up in the lounge area of the main area, we all sang the song. It felt good!  
(The next day I wrote the next two verses which are still virginally waiting to be sung)

IMAGINE...

(With love, respect and thanks to John Lennon - beloved prophet of the 20th century)

Imagine there's no dogma  
I wonder if you can  
No helpers above us  
Beneath us only feet  
Imagine all the people  
Living in their truth  
Oh oh.....  
I want to be a human  
But not the only one  
I wonder if you'll join me  
And we can 'life-exercise' as one

Imagine 7 Circles Cafe  
I wonder if you can  
paintings all around you  
music, philosophy and tea  
Imagine all the people  
Living in harmony  
Oh oh.....  
I wonder what may happen  
10 years or so from now  
Do think we'll practise then  
to embrace the world and live as one

Imagine Bapak's vision  
I wonder if you can  
The growth of spirit  
Purification of man  
Imagine all the people

Being who we really are  
Oh oh.....  
I used to be afraid of  
So many different things  
Now my understanding's grown  
I can embrace this life as one

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## GROUP NEWS

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### Melbourne

Dear All

It with a very heavy heart that we must inform you that St Mary's College has unilaterally cancelled our booking. The Congress will not go ahead at St Mary's College. We will need to find a different venue, and perhaps, select different dates.

Recently, the Conference Co-ordinator that we had been dealing with at St Mary's, resigned. The new Co-ordinator seems to have taken a very different attitude towards the booking.

In that regard, we have received a letter from St Mary's which states that St Mary's has "reviewed policies and procedures with respect to our conference bookings". The letter states that given considerations of "numbers, age groupings and legal liability" in relation to our booking, St Mary's will not proceed with the booking. It says that St Mary's insurers have given them no choice but to cancel. They have refunded the \$5,000 deposit accordingly. We have tried to discuss this issue with St Mary's, and to negotiate an agreed way forward. They were not prepared to enter any discussions, nor to give any details regarding the reason for the cancellation.

While technically we could seek to enforce our agreement with them, the reality is (for various reasons) that this will not result in the Congress going ahead at St Mary's. The only realistic course is to do our best to find another venue, even though this will of course be difficult.

We are very disappointed that this has happened, particularly given that so much preparatory work has been done. Hopefully that work will not all be wasted.

We have spoken with Queens College, who were as shocked and surprised as we were by this turn of events. They apologised to us on behalf of the College community, and said that they would of course also refund the \$1,000 deposit that we had paid them.

Obviously, all payments made by members to the Congress Committee to date for registrations etc, will be refunded in full.

We would respectfully ask that everybody exercise as much patience and persistence as possible, while we try to sort out a way forward.

We will start work immediately in terms of exploring alternative options, and we will keep you informed of developments. We are hopeful that something positive can emerge from the present, difficult situation.

With best wishes,

The Melbourne Congress Committee

### **Perth - Bavali H**

A celebration of the 100th day since Christopher J's passing was held for Hilda's son-in-law. Our condolences for our dear Sister and her family.

On July 20th Trisha K-E gave an absorbing talk on her contacts and recorded talks with Alzheimer's people. She quoted from her book 'Listen to the Talk of Us: People with Dementia Speak Out.' This book of uplifting conversations is available from Trisha at [trisha.kotaiewers@gmail.com](mailto:trisha.kotaiewers@gmail.com) or from the Alzheimer's Association WA, Cost \$19.95.

A warm 'Get well soon' to Amanah, who is in a wheelchair due to an injured foot - and in the middle of moving house to Gwelup.

Our July Susila Dharma soup sales made a record intake of \$100, and go to support our sponsorship of 7 year-old Susilawati's education at Rungan Sari.

Four Perth members, Sophia, Alfiah, Simon and Bavali, attended the mid-year Gunnebah Council meeting and reported after Latihan on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August of their experiences. Sophia's report was by proxy, as she was by then on her way to UK for her eldest son's wedding, a Conference and a European holiday with Andrew.

### **Sydney – Savana S**

#### **Committee Doubles in Self-Amazement**

Subud Sydney's miniscule committee doubled overnight in June with the addition of two volunteers. A sigh of relief was heaved by all, particularly the chair who had been blitzed on the work front. We now boast a treasurer and secretary as well as chair and vice-chair – Dahlan S and Savana S, respectively. Reportedly, there are more to come.

#### **Just as Well**

And now for the bad news....after many years of massive contributions to the Subud Sydney Group on every front imaginable, Dairobi and Chairani P have decided to live in Canada. Subud Sydney hosted a farewell lunch in their honour on Sunday August 3. They will be much missed by the group and even muchlier missed by the committee who has put out an urgent call to action to all the sleeping volunteers in the group.

#### **Lunch Money**

On second Sundays every month volunteers contribute and cook lunch to sell after latihan. This helps feed people, feed the coffers, and feed the spirit.

### **Knit-In**

The last couple of Sundays, many members (including a couple of hip guys – hipper for their participation) got together to knit squares for the Wraps for Love project sponsored by the ABC. Beginners were taught the basic stitch and ran with them. Some of us also participated in the ABC Knit-in in Ultimo and at Hornsby Library. The amazing colours and shapes in all the wraps and their promise of instant warmth show how people will give willingly of their time and goods when there is creativity, friendship, and good organization involved. Inspired, Subud Sydney is going to launch a knitting project of its own which will be open to everyone to participate in. More on this very soon.....

### **Gunnebah**

We were fortunate to have our vice-chair, Vivienne J to represent us at the Gunnebah gathering as our chair was unavailable. While in principle, groups should fund travel by their representatives to out-of-town gatherings, chairs, vice-chairs, and helpers have usually ended up funding themselves. Luckily, we had a Second Sunday Lunch meeting just before Gunnebah and members who were there gave generously for their lunch that day so we could at least offer partial funds for our rep. Have we started something? Sydney will have its Report-back meeting on Gunnebah soon but in the meantime, here is a brief report from Vivienne:

"I enjoyed my first experience of a National Meeting representing the Sydney group. Got to know some new people & catch up with others I've met. Staying at Gunnebah is a treat & Isti's food an even greater treat! I was particularly inspired by the members who spoke openly & honestly about their experiences in Subud...the good, the bad, the happy, the sad...recognising the unique spiritual journey that each of us is on, and supporting one another is what I believe makes us a community."  
Vivienne J

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### **NATIONAL HELPER REPORT – Lydia S**

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After a dynamic weekend at Gunnebah (17th-21st July) the national helpers are happy to announce that we will be visiting Tasmania (date to be finalised), Perth (in October) and Melbourne (towards the end of November) before the end of the year.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Gunnebah weekend with such enthusiasm and a huge hug to the Gunnebah crew for their loving care and hospitality - all right we'll forgive you for the extra kilos around our waistlines, it was well worth it!

Please forgive us for anything that was out of place  
Love from the N/H team

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## SUBUD NATIONAL SURVEY – Bavali H

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This month, the Survey will start appearing after your group Latihan or may be posted out to you. We are inviting returns from all members – those who are regular and committed, and those who attend only occasionally or almost never, due to a whole variety of reasons. We need to hear what these reasons are via everyone completing the survey. It is your voice and way of letting us know how else Subud Australia can better meet your needs. Those who have left, or not visited the Group for some time, also have much to tell us if we give them the opportunity.

Where members may have strong opinions about the content of the survey, your telling us this via completing the survey is the way we get to hear your views. You may choose to not answer one question, or may write on the form and tell us your objections, and all of this gives you a stronger voice than discarding the survey altogether. Please take the time to complete the forms as some feedback is better than none. **Each voice is important.**

Parts A and B ask for membership details and descriptive information to help us get a better snapshot of who makes up Subud Australia. Extensive thought has gone into how best to provide and **guarantee members' confidentiality** on Part 3, questions that ask for more sensitive information, and on questions that ask for members' views and needs. Hence Part 3, on green paper, contains no identifying information and in is a separate return envelope which can be posted directly to the Survey Manager. We hope this will give all members the confidence to tell us what you think, so the Survey truly gives us a broad representation of Subud Australia.

Looking forward with anticipation to the reply envelopes overflowing my mailbox,  
Yours,  
Bavali  
Subud Survey Manager

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SUSILA DHARMA

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The International Child Development Program (ICDP), which you will have read about in the recent E-News editions, is potentially set to grow quite quickly, according to Sandra B. At the Gunnebah council meeting, Sandra reported on the latest developments with ICDP as Renee G was overseas celebrating Subud's anniversary in Germany.

Sandra told the council that ICDP has piqued the interest of the Save the Children Fund as well as the Grameen Bank which specializes in microcredit development programs. Sandra asked that anyone interested in doing the ICDP training; writing educational materials; or creating multimedia packages please

contact Renee G – chair of SD Australia on <hexamo2@gmail.com>

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## THE SUBUD ACCENT

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Julia Ryan has stepped down as the Subud Accent editor due to an increased demand on her time through professional responsibilities. Thank you, Julia, for all of your work on the Accent. The future of the Accent is being discussed as the E-News grows and the Subud Australia website is being re-developed. If you have any ideas or comments regarding the Accent or developing an alternative – please contact National Chair, David W on <davidweek@cal.berkeley.edu>

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## ZONE 1 AND 2 MEETING TO COINCIDE WITH MELBOURNE CONGRESS

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Another reason to attend Melbourne Congress in January 2009 will be to meet with delegates from all over our Zone which stretches from Iran to New Zealand. It is expected that most countries in the Asia-Pacific region will send at least one delegate to the Zone meeting which will be spread over two days at our National Congress. There will probably be the added gift of several International Helpers attending as well. The International Helpers are also planning an Australian visit for November but more on that when more details are known.

If you or your group would like to help with financial support to bring delegates from some of the countries in our zone, please contact Zone 1,2 rep Renata P on <renatapeek@xtra.co.nz>

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