

Is the pandemic panic really necessary?

by David Piesse

I have been caught up in the panic of the Coronavirus (CV) for a long time, and must say I never panicked nor was I ever fearful. I was really fascinated by it.

We are well stocked with all of the necessities, and we have lots of various medicines at the ready. We have increased our intake of supplements, and I have made nose and mouth sprays from propolis.

I have made Lipomal c, colloidal silver and have ordered herbs, sprays etc; in fact one could say I have read and done a lot. I was particularly motivated by having family members in various countries and wanted to learn what to do for their best protection.

So CV is extremely contagious and can be fatal particularly if you are old and have other underlying conditions, or in fact if you have sicknesses and you are young but less so. Very few healthy people get really sick even though they do catch CV.

So far, as of 30th March, according to the official figures there have been 721,902 cases of CV and 33,965 deaths worldwide. These figures may not be correct, as many experts say that in fact there are a lot of people who have been infected with CV, but have none or few symptoms and so have not been recorded.

On the other side, many people who have died may have multiple severe health issues and what has caused the death is unclear. This

would lower the chance of dying as a percentage

The figures for influenza bring us back to a slightly different reality.

In Australia it is estimated that each year influenza causes an average of 13,500 hospitalisations and more than 3,000 deaths in the 50+ age group, which suggests more than double the number of deaths from motor vehicle accidents can be attributed to complications from influenza.

The highest rates of hospitalisation are seen in children under five and the elderly. Unlike influenza, CV is mainly dangerous for older people, not young children who it hardly ever badly affects.

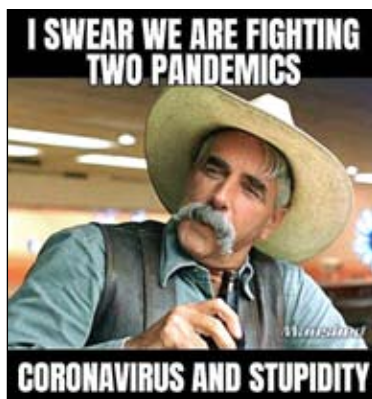
In the USA the flu has resulted in 9.3 million to 49 million illnesses each year in the United States since 2010. Each year, on average, five to 20% of the United States population gets the flu.

It is estimated that the flu results in 31.4 million outpatient visits there, and more than 200,000 hospitalisations each year.

During the severe 2017-2018 flu season, one of the longest in recent years, estimates indicate that more than 900,000 people were hospitalised in the USA, and more than 80,000 people died from flu. www.healthline.com/health/influenza/facts-and-statistics#3

Illnesses range from mild to severe and even death.

Hospitalisation and death occur mainly among high risk groups. Worldwide, these annual epidemics are estimated to result in about



three to five million cases of severe illness, and about 290,000 to 650,000 respiratory deaths. [www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-\(seasonal\)](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal))

So every year, many people die from influenza and no-one really notices unless a loved one dies, and so far CV has not come close to the annual infections and deaths attributed to the flu.

Many experts from around the world are questioning why CV has had so much attention, and the need for the lockdowns that have resulted in fear and panic and the destruction of people's livelihoods now and into the future (see links below).

I think if we look at the South Korean model, where they have great success in containing the spread of CV, they have mainly done it by tracing and testing. Tracing all contacts that people have had with infected people, and then contacting them by sending them messages to come in for testing.

They have made testing free for many, and otherwise at almost no cost, and made it very easy to access. Korea has only isolated affected people. So Korea has not shut down and life goes on. Korean companies have been innovative and bringing out new and quicker testing kits.

Companies have developed smart apps; for instance if you fly into Korea you must download an app and report daily where you are and your temperature. It is only now that Korea is imposing mandatory quarantine on new arrivals, I assume because CV is spreading rapidly in many countries.

So why did Australia not follow this lead? We had 7 weeks when we did almost nothing and now we are doing it the lazy way by locking down everyone, closing state borders etc and by so doing destroying many people's futures.

China, other Asian countries and Russia have been quick to test and utilise any drug that may work (particularly some anti-malarial, some HIV drugs and Interferon Alfa-2B). They have been flexible and ready to try out things quickly, and as result they have saved many lives.

There are of course simple things one can do to reduce the risk of contracting CV, and if you are old and or have an underlying health issue, keeping isolated may be a wise move.

Suggestions to do: keeping happy and fit, with fresh air, sunshine, taking very high doses of vitamin D3 plus taking vitamin K2.

Drinking lots of hot clear teas like ginger, lemon etc. Keeping your nasal passages and throat clean with a netti pot and salt water gargles, washing your hands etc. If you get a sore throat, promptly use Betadine as the iodine in it kills CV.

The US government has handed out \$6 trillion, that's \$6000 billion, to mostly the wealthiest banks, corporations and people in the world. What will six trillion dollars allow them to buy at dirt cheap prices from so many distressed assets that the less well-off will have to sell for whatever they get?

I wonder what will our world will be like in a year from now. I remember how our world changed after 9/11 and the war on terror started and we had to be fearful... and we lost so many freedoms all of course for a good cause.

I have no formal qualifications, and these are my opinions only.

Some interesting links:

www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/12-experts-question-covid-19-panic
www.anti-empire.com/german-virologist-of-international-rendown-warns-government-lockdowns-are-a-horrible-mistake-will-make-crisis-worse
www.unz.com/ishamir/the-coronavirus-fear-and-poverty
www.anti-empire.com/a-fantastic-recap-of-everything-that-is-wrong-with-the-official-hysterical-corona-narrative-by-one-hell-of-a-scientist
thesaker.is/covid-an-infectious-disease-and-a-phantom-pandemic



by Pauline Ahern

On a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon in March, the Garden Club visited Martha Bakhtiri's stunning garden on Avalon community. Avalon started as a community 40 years ago, and the natural regrowth along with dedicated plantings has transformed a formerly logged piece of land into a forested 400 acres.

Martha has been on her site for 36 years. She started with a partially-built house and a bare block. Using cuttings and gifted pieces where possible, Martha has created a secluded calm oasis where the understory now flourishes. The original plantings have reached mature heights and provide shade and protection.

12 volt power and water collected from the roof for all the water requirements, along with using whatever is at hand, make for conscious environmental living. Dotted amongst the varied plants and trees are an eclectic collection of Martha's natural sculptures.

Thank you Martha, it was a joy to spend time with you and your delightful garden.

Depending on what is required from all citizens around the Covid-19 crisis, we have a local nursery lined up for the April visit. At this stage we will not post the details, but if the visit goes ahead we will post on Nimbin Hookups and email all Garden Club members.

Stay safe, don't take any risks, and follow the guidelines as they change from day to day.

Quell this monster – make surface cleaners

by Thom Culpepper

Efficient hand and surface cleaning is imperative at this time of virus emergency. 'Scrubbing' your hands is the best way to stop the spread of germs and viruses and the subsequent contamination of surfaces.

Washing hands is recommended after all cases of risk if you have access to soap and water. If you are out and travelling, a portable 'scrub' is needed.

As you may have noticed, most retailers have had their supplies exhausted. Don't be concerned, as groups and families can make the World Health Organisation's recommended hand cleaners and rubs in the home. You will require several components to achieve a competent mix.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published a formula based on their experience with the Ebola emergency in Africa. Not a lot of supermarkets to be seen in regional Africa!

NB. Nothing is as efficient as washing your hands with soap and water; hand sterilisers are for an emergency.

Simple mixes made with three parts of at least 80% alcohol plus one part aloe vera gel as an emollient (saves your hands drying out); a nuisance though as it is constantly sticky.

Gel formulation

300mls alcohol – must be 80% or over.
(Use isopropyl alcohol or ethanol.
Domestic methylated spirits is no good.



Nor is booze, as most spirits are only 37-40% alcohol. Drink them, don't anoint with them.)

100mls of aloe vera gel.

A few drops of tea tree oil or better, lemon myrtle oil.

½-litre squeeze bottle as a container.

Spray formulation

85% of 96% ethanol or 85% isopropyl alcohol.

2.5% of 6% hydrogen peroxide.

1.5% of vegetable glycerine or glycerol.

0.02% (a few drops) tea tree or lemon myrtle oil.

A drop or two of scented oil, such as rose geranium or attar of roses.

Cooled, boiled filtered water to make up to

100 by volume.

A spray bottle.

Leave for a day or so, so that any contamination is neutralised.

If you can, get a still to make ethanol. It is worthwhile obtaining one. The best will produce alcohol in the range of 90-96% depending on yeast used.

I would recommend the TURBO 500 distillation system. Following instructions, this machine will produce exceptionally clean spirit at about 96%, depending on the selection of yeast.

The machines can be had from Richmond Homebrewing Supplies in Lismore, opposite Aldi on Conway Street, phone 02 6622-8448.

Keep well!

Plant of the month

Leucaena, a native of Central America



Blue quandong
Elaeocarpus grandis

Selected and photographed by Richard Burer, Bush regenerator

Plant of the month gets a big tick for the start of April, as my old friends the birds and the bees get happily high on the white flowers growing in racemes along the long branches of this iconic tree.

Following this great display of flowers is the well-known blue fruit or drupe which is globular and partly fleshy, enclosing a decorative hard seed.

This deeply pitted stone-like outer seed is highly regarded in the Indian subcontinent and

Nepal where it holds special religious significance to some Indian sects.

In Australia this is a well-known regeneration tree particularly in the Northern Rivers where it's often planted and well liked because it's beautiful and grows fast.

In Nimbin it's common in most valleys and is happily eaten by the Green catbird, Rose crowned fruit dove, superb fruit dove, topknot pigeon and Wompoo fruit dove.

At home, the lorikeets cover this strong tree and are reminding us that we are well placed to be grateful for our country life.

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

How can you fill in the time when you have to stay home? Get out into the garden, bush or down to the creek and do some weeding.

It has long been recognised that spending time in nature is good for health. Plants produce volatile chemicals which boost the immune system so don't hold back. Bacteria in soil act like antidepressants and have been demonstrated to improve mood.

How do you know what is a weed? Research! And consider the specific circumstances of that species. Weeds are a complex and variable group of plants. A weed to one is a boon for another. For the cattle farmer, paspalum and siratro are important fodder species but these species are an anathema for bush regenerators. They will interfere with and prevent natural recruitment of native species.

Leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*, a leguminous tree, was introduced to Australia in the late 1970s to feed cattle. Native to Central America, it's another species that has been transported all around the planet. Also taken to the Philippines, Taiwan, Hawaii and Fiji, it is now considered an environmental weed in those countries. *The Global Invasive Species Database* includes it in their top 100.

This plant is hardy. It's drought tolerant and prefers alkaline soil. Frost will burn the frilly bi-pinnate leaves but it bounces back when the weather warms. It will survive intermittent water-logging and doesn't mind a slightly saline situation.

Also called river, horse or cow tamarind, the leaves are palatable, as nutritious as lucerne and a valuable source of fodder for fattening steers.

Excellent weight gains can be achieved, but farmers need to carefully manage plantings to



Leucaena pods persist

make sure they are well grazed or trimmed to keep them shrubby and stop them growing too tall. Growers also need to prevent its dispersion beyond the paddock. Strict growing protocols must be in place to avoid this.

While it delivers impressive results in grazing operations, leucaena can readily spread to other areas. The small hard shiny brown seeds are transported by water, stock and machinery.

If a grazing regime is not available Leucaena has potential to become weedy and form dense thickets. It became feral in Northern Australia as seed washed downstream from the paddocks planted by the farmers.

Note that Leucaena is not suitable feed for horses, donkeys and other non-ruminants as it contains a toxic alkaloid, mimosine. This can cause hair loss and loss of productivity in affected animals. Cattle may need their rumen inoculated with a bacterium to detoxify the alkaloid if Leucaena comprises more than one third of their diet.

Flowering all year round, the creamy-yellow pompom

flower heads develop into flat pods about 15 cms long, each containing 20 or more seeds.

Many of the seeds will fall beneath the parent plant, forming a carpet of seedlings. This can lead to it forming a dense grove, excluding native species and preventing movement of wildlife, humans and stock. The brown pods persist on the tree for a long time.

The good news is green Leucaena pods, seeds and new shoots are edible for humans. Most sources prescribe cooking as necessary as heat destroys the alkaloids. Leucaena also has medicinal properties and is used in herbal remedies. Promoted by permaculture enthusiasts, it has been planted in many regions.

While Leucaena is not on the list of prohibited or restricted invasive species in Australia, the North Coast of NSW is a general exclusion zone for this species and land managers must prevent its spread.

Leucaena can be the case of a useful plant in the wrong place. It doesn't belong on creek banks or road sides. Happy weeding.

Mother Nature is amazing

by Donna Connolly

Unprecedented circumstances and events completely colour our every move at this time. Our habits and lives are changing daily as new evidence comes to light surrounding the Coronavirus.

Simultaneously we can see evidence of our planet cleansing, purging, healing; coming back into balance in such a relatively short time.

As humans retreat and hunker down, there is less pollution from cars, factories and daily life, allowing air quality to restore.

Canals in Venice (pictured) begin to clear, and animals are coming back into most provinces in China too. In fact there are birds in Wuhan for the first time in 20 years!

On a personal level, I have

seen snails in my yard for the first time in 5½ years (since I've lived here).

Could it be that we are the virus?

Like most things, it is the best of times and it is the worst of times: it comes down to perception and keeping our vibration high.

On the shady side of humanity we have seen perhaps the very worst of personal selfishness and distorted ego, while at the very same time witnessing the best and most humble, heart-centred behaviour that humankind has to offer.

Once again the animals are shining the greatest light on the changes that need to occur for our planet to heal. We need to live simply, to live in the moment and show gratitude for what life has to offer. It is time to slow down

and listen to our inner selves, alongside the guidance of our animal counterparts.

Most animals don't see this time as a crisis, they see it as a rebalancing and reconnection. A necessity.

As I have written in previous articles, the white animals have been showing up from the prophecies of the first nations people from around the world.

This has been a long time coming, I still believe that we have the ability to change our behaviors and quite frankly I thoroughly look forward to the new future.

Knowing how close we came to losing everything with our collective greed and ignorance, we can no longer ignore our part in this.

The one constant in life is change. This will probably be the biggest change we are



Aquatic life returns to Venetian canals

likely to see in our lifetime.

We have chosen to share in this experience at this time. So it is time to step up and make the changes necessary for the evolution of the planet and all her inhabitants.

Allow kindness and compassion to rule. We have the opportunity to witness and to be a part of the

rejuvenation and the healing of our planet.

This is a truly pivotal crossroads for Mother Earth and all her beautiful creatures.

Things may never be the same from this point on... and that may just be the most wonderful thing to have happened.

The Last Word (by Dora):

It is a wonderful time to be alive, the air is fresher, we can hear nature's sounds. It's time to relax and tune back into our true selves, we have been distracted for too long. Love is the only way forward. Blessings to all.

Stay connected, and for more information go to: rivergem.com.au or text to 0490-156-038

And people stayed home

And people stayed home
and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and stopped
and listened deeper
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their shadow
and people began to think differently
and people healed
and in the absence of people who lived in
ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
even the earth began to heal
and when the danger ended
and people found each other
grieved for the dead people
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways of life
and healed the earth completely
just as they were healed themselves.

– Catherine O’Meara, 20th March 2020

When parents break up

Legal writes
by John Adams

The Australian common law is adversarial. Solomon only had to decide between a mother and an imposter, a question easily sorted these days with DNA.

The usual case now is which of two actual parents gets the kids most of the time. In a normal case the winner (the now impoverished mum) gets what we used to call custody, the loser ending up with alternate weekends and half the school holidays, the fun times.

We haven’t called it ‘custody and access’ for ages. Now it’s the grammatically clumsy but politically correct ‘live with and spend time with’. Most parents are enlightened enough to know that fighting over kids is bad for them, and manage to smooth their transition from one house to two without bothering the legal system. Others, if they’re poor enough, get legal aid; if rich, private lawyers. Those unfortunates who are neither, represent themselves.

An early English manifestation of the adversarial system was trial by battle. Professor Plucknett, in his *A Concise History of the Common Law*, tells us “there was a professional band of champions who undertook



business all over the country; courts would arrange the dates of battle so that the champions could fit in their engagements conveniently.” In some ways, things haven’t changed a lot. Lawyers are trained to fight, and judicial officers take account of lawyers’ unavailable dates when listing appearances.

The problem with kids in the adversarial system is that under Rule 4.1.1 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Australian Solicitors’ Conduct Rules 2015, solicitors *must* act in the best interests of their client, but under section 60CA of the *Family Law Act 1975* (‘the Act’) the court must regard the best interests of the child as the paramount consideration.

Parents’ interests are not relevant. Parents have duties,

not rights. Kids have rights. But lawyers, the parents’ champions, are paid to fight. You see the dilemma.

So some academic lawyers visited Europe to see if the civil law could provide assistance. The result, Division 12A of the Act, describes a non-adversarial system. One judge runs the whole case from beginning to end. Many of the rules of evidence don’t apply. The court has its own expert witnesses and the kids get their own lawyers.

First there’s the mandatory (confidential) family dispute resolution conference. This can be face-to-face, telephone, or shuttle – where you don’t even hear the hated voice of the ex.

It can end there, with a parenting plan (unenforceable) or consent orders

(enforceable), or not. Either way you get a certificate to attach to the court filing. When the documents, Initiating Application, Affidavit, Notice of Risk etc, are filed and served on the other side, it’s on.

At each mention, typically in the Federal Circuit Court, lawyers try to negotiate consent orders. The judge might make interim orders, send the parties to a conciliation conference (not confidential), order drug tests, appoint an Independent Children’s Lawyer (ICL), and/or a family report writer, adjourn to another mention and, more mentions later, set it down for a trial a year or two hence, when the judge, ably assisted by the family report writer and the ICL, makes the final orders.

Like: live with mum and spend time with dad alternate weekends and half school holidays, plus orders for changeovers, speaking nicely of the other parent, school reports, special days, drug testing and whatever.

Parents’ lawyers don’t have a lot of say, let alone be their clients’ champions. Until, later on, when a parent breaches the orders, then it’s contravention proceedings and the familiar territory, for the adversarial lawyer, of guilt beyond reasonable doubt. And slightly more traumatised kids.

Saving Ginger, Meggs and Dita

Koala Kolumn

by Susannah Keogh,
Care co-ordinator

Ginger and her joey, Meggs, were rescued from one of our major car-hit hot spots on Coraki Road, near Flood Reserve Road in East Coraki. Despite the locals doing an awesome job of placing warning signs alerting drivers of koalas crossing ahead, not a month goes by without our hotline getting a call-out for what is usually a fatality in the area.

Our very talented tree climbing rescuer Owen Lewis was already in his gear getting ready to climb the tree when Marley and I noticed the tree he was about to climb was not the only one in the vicinity with koalas perched in the branches. We reassessed and decided the mum and bub couple perched low and nearest to the road would be the most likely to have been hit by the car and therefore our target for rescue.

Ginger was suspiciously quiet and still, which confirmed our concerns that she may have been hit but Meggs was ready to make a run for it. Owen had a net ready for her and snatched her up safely and passed her down to Marley. Ginger didn’t make it easy for Owen, wedging herself tight between two



forks and numerous vines making it near impossible for Owen to pull her out. After many swear-words, Ginger was finally out of the vines and savaging Owen’s arms while he attempted to get her inside the canvas bag – easier said than done.

Despite her quiet demeanour, Ginger was mostly unharmed, thankfully (as was Meggs) but we decided to hang onto them for a few days for observation.

Just a few days later we had another car hit mum and bub – this mum was not so lucky. She was dead on arrival but had managed to completely protect her baby from any harm. The baby was named Dita (after Dita von Tease who had been supporting FOK on social media which we thought was very kind of her).

Dita was placed in home care, but was so distressed after losing her

Mum in such a traumatic way, she threw herself at the windows, walls and doors. It was very distressing to watch as a carer, and considering she wasn’t eating or sleeping much, we had grave concerns for her wellbeing. We needed to make a big decision regarding her care, so after consulting Currumbin Wildlife Hospital’s vet, Fumie Tokonami, we decided to try placing Dita with Ginger and Meggs.

So in the middle of the day, while Meggs was sleeping alone (she was the same size/age as Dita), we placed Dita nearby Ginger and left them alone to see if Ginger would accept this new baby. We had tried this before unsuccessfully but this time we had a win. Within 10 minutes, Ginger and Dita were embracing and about five minutes after that, Dita was fast asleep. It was so emotional for us all to see Dita happy at last, feeling safe in the arms of a mother.

There were many tears shed but could you blame us? From that moment on, they were a little family. Dita and Meggs became great friends, cuddling and wrestling all the time, and after a few weeks, Ginger was released without the girls back where she came from. The girls are continuing to grow happily together and will be released at the same time in a suitable location in a few weeks. They are very feisty girls so I wish their suitors good luck!

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, phone:

(02) 6622-1233

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

www.friendsofthekoala.org

or email: [info@](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org)

friendsofthekoala.org

Follow us on Facebook.

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

PLEASE NOTE

Due to Covid-19 and our need to protect our staff and volunteers so that we can continue to rescue, rehabilitate and release koalas, we have cancelled tours indefinitely and are putting physical distance measures in place.

If for any reason people have a need to come to the Care Centre, please make sure you take your temperature before coming, and if it’s at all raised please do not come.

Which bitless bridle should I use?

There are so many different bitless bridles now that people can get confused. I think it's wonderful they're so popular and lots of companies are now manufacturing them. There are almost as many bitless options now as bits!

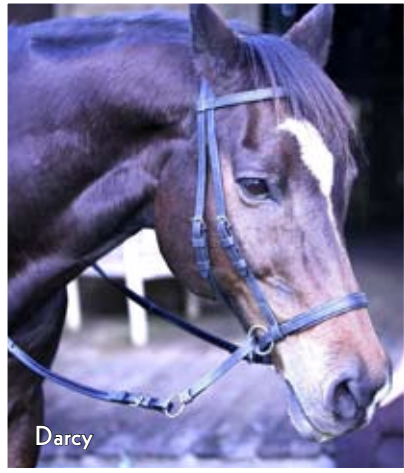
The main types of bitless bridle are cross-under and side-pull. There are also bosals and rope halters, with the reins attached behind the jaw.

Halter – This is the oldest form of riding bitless. Webbing halters can be used but rope halters give clearer communication. Riding in halters is favoured by many natural horsemanship riders. These work by applying pressure to the nose.

Hackamore – These have been around a long time and are favoured by showjumpers. They are a type of side-pull using pressure solely on the nose. The reins attach to the ends of shanks giving leverage which makes it a strong bridle.

Bosal – Another form of bitless bridle that has been around for a long time. Traditionally used by stockmen, used extensively in western riding and with young horses prior to biting them. Made of stiffened rawhide it works via nose pressure only. Due to the extension of the bosal behind the horse's head, to which the reins are attached, the bosal also has extra leverage. The back of the bosal lifts as pressure is applied to the reins, pushing the nose piece downwards to apply more pressure to the nose.

Side-Pull – The side-pull developed from the rope halter, which is used by attaching the reins to the knot behind the horses' jaw. By creating attachments at the side, the reins



by Suzy Maloney, Happy Horses Bitless

could be attached there, giving clearer direction to the horse. Nowadays they're also made with other materials, to look more like a traditional bridle. All the pressure from the rider's hands is felt on the nose of the horse. Some side-pull bitless bridles also come with shanks for leverage.

Cross-Under – The first cross-under was designed by Dr Robert Cook 30 years ago. He spent years studying the effect of bits on horses, both physiologically and behaviourally. From this research he designed a totally new method of communication with the horse that was humane and effective. The cross-under works by distributing the pressure from the rider's hands around the horse's entire head.

So, which bitless bridle should you choose? It really depends on what you plan to do with your horse. All horses are happier without a bit in their mouth, so any of these methods is a

step up for your horse.

If you are interested in Western riding, then perhaps the bosal is for you. If you like casual trail rides you might be happy with a rope halter or side-pull. Some people don't like to use leverage with their horses but if you're ok with that a hackamore is a great choice for sports such as show jumping and eventing. The cross-under can be used in most situations.

Horses are trained to lead with a halter from a young age. They are accustomed to the pressure applied by a halter and how it feels on the nose. For this reason, moving into a side-pull bitless bridle can be an easy transition. If you're willing to do a little training to new equipment and want that extra bit of control, the cross-under is a great option. Because it distributes the pressure around the horses' whole head it is a stronger bridle than the side-pull.

If you are wanting extra control then probably the cross-under, hackamore, leverage side-pull and bosal will give you that little bit extra. The normal side-pull and the halter are great for low-key riding or in situations where the rider is an experienced trainer and can ensure safety in volatile situations.

The horse may also decide what type of bitless option they like. Trialling a few types is also a great idea to see what works for you. At the end of the day the most important thing is removing the bit, not the choice of which type of bitless you use.

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Horse intelligence

by Les Rees

Has it ever occurred to you that some horses seem to be extremely smart?

I've had this conversation many times with clients and horse friends and it would seem that the jury is still out on this one mainly because people view animal intelligence from a human point of view. I'm inclined to think that firstly we need to decide what criteria we are using to define intelligence in horses.

The dictionary definition of intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. When applied to animals, it is defined as the combination of skills and abilities that allow them to live in and adapt to their specific environments. They possess the ability to adapt to their surroundings by learning to change their habits and behaviours.

This would suggest that it isn't possible to create a "one size fits all" intelligence test for animals because they live in many different and diverse environments. This is why direct comparison of intelligence across species doesn't work well: there is no single standard of what smart means across differently evolved animals.

I personally think that all equines have the ability to be smart if we allow them the opportunities to gain the experiences needed to create smart thinking.

In the wild, horses learn how to survive in an environment that can be frightening and potentially dangerous; they have evolved as flight animals enabling them to flee at high speeds in order to avoid being eaten.

Their muscular and skeletal systems provide them with powerful limbs that can react at a moment's notice, during which time their digestive systems shut down in order to divert energy supplies to muscles needed for flight.

Being able to read the signs of danger is extremely important to them. Sight, sound and smell all have bearing on their reactions and even more so is the ability to speak and read not only the language of their herd members but that of other animals as well. This is why horses have been found to recognise and react to human emotions even from a fair distance away. Not surprisingly, they have also been found to have the ability to make several facial expressions themselves.

Researchers at the University of Sussex



identified seventeen facial movements in horses, contributing to further research as to their association with positive or negative emotional states.

I'm sure anyone that has anything to do with horses will already know this as it is constantly being demonstrated during our interactions with them. Their body language gives us visual cues in the form of movement of ears, head, legs and tail which tells us what their emotional state is at any given moment.

Given that we can recognise these as signs of emotions, it makes sense that horses also read our gestures to inform them of our emotional states. It seems strange to me that many humans don't connect this with a universal language shared between all animals.

Ask any person who lives

on the land, and they will tell you that they read the signs of nature. Unfortunately, many people who live in cities have lost the ability to do this.

One thing I've found is that living in a rich environment is extremely important to horses' development, enabling and equipping their ability to solve problems. If you leave them in a paddock and fail to interact with them, you create an exclusion zone between you and them.

If you engage with them, creating non-threatening, fun-based training, you'll be surprised at how smart they can become. You will soon see that they will enjoy spending time with you, each one developing a special personality as they bond and learn that they can trust you.

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The Welcome to Nimbin Kit is a project of the Nimbin Advisory Group (NAG). It was auspiced by Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC), in partnership with the Nimbin Community Centre and the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce. Funded by the partners and Lismore City Council, with contributions from Nimbin Hills Real Estate and Lifestyle Real Estate.

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Connecting in strange times

Just before the virus Covid-19 broke as the pandemic it is at the moment, I went to my favourite place on Earth, Rottneest Island, off the coast of Perth, WA.

I discovered at my father's wake 13 years ago that I was conceived there, in the Bathurst lighthouse cottage, so you see, Rottneest is in my DNA.

It was also a place my brother and I often holidayed with our parents and friends. We used to swim, cycle and wander through the pines and Morton Bay figs, and marvel at the sights of quokkas, salt lakes and nesting birds.

One of my earliest memories was of nearly drowning at a heavenly place called 'the Basin' and being saved and being quite cross about that. I was four and hadn't learned to swim properly, but that near-death experience was strangely beautiful.

This current visit was a gift from a very old Perth friend of mine, Charles, and we fitted it in perfectly in the scheme of things. Yes, the airports from here in the Northern Rivers to Perth were practically empty of

tourists, but everything went smoothly and I did not get sick.

I stayed for a couple of nights both sides of the Monday to Friday Rottneest holiday stay with dear friends from university days, and soaked up the gentle companionship they offered.

Then, on Monday, I met Charles at the Fremantle wharf from where the ferry departed and we were transported the 23.9 kilometres across the water to that sunny, beautiful island.

Each day was perfect: low 20s, sun-drenched, calm and clear sea, white sand and birdsong. It was extraordinary really. I don't think I've ever known so many days of perfection. Yet, I felt it in my bones that this was a sacred time, before something awful.

And here we are. We've entered a time like the plague, except with wifi, where in-person social isolation is required for the wellbeing of our whole community.

Such a term as 'social distancing', though must be very worrying for many people, which is why I prefer another such as 'physical distancing'. Hopefully we

can continue feeling socially together while maintaining physical distance as much as possible in order to slow the transmission of this disease.

I am worried about the mental health of us all, as physical/social distancing is a well-known contributor to increased feelings of fear, anxiety and depression born from loneliness.

We humans, like most other animals, need social connection; that's the nature of the beast. It's primarily for this reason that I am offering more counselling sessions via Messenger and FaceTime.

Clinical hypnotherapy is also offered online. Both adapt well to the on-line format.

My Rottneest holiday feels like a dream, quite apart from everything else, and yet I look down at my feet and see the tan marks of my sandals as well as the tan marks of my bathers, and an abiding feeling of wellness and openness to possibilities.

And I can still detect the very special smell of sea and beach rosemary on my rashie. These connect me to my reality, my history, my DNA.

My connection with my past is as important



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

as anyone else's. It's from my sense of self that I am effective in being present with others.

Perhaps this is why we all can contribute: finding the me-ness of me (the you-ness of you) even in these difficult times, so that we can be there not only for ourselves but the selves of others.

The madness of hoarding food and toilet paper doesn't define us as human (that defines a profound anxiety for the future); what defines us, and it's true for many other animals, is a capacity of compassion and deep caring.

If anything is to come of this in these difficult times, then I hope it is a greater capacity for sustained empathy for diversity in community.

That's what I'm hoping for.

Coronavirus and pregnancy

Doula Wisdom

by Kirrah Stewart

So much has changed since the last *Nimbin GoodTimes* publication. It's hard to know what the future holds and most people are taking it day by day.

Covid-19 is a new disease, so there is still a lot to learn about how it spreads and how severe it can be. We are learning more everyday.

While information is limited, pregnant women should be considered a vulnerable or at-risk group. According to advice from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, pregnant women do not appear to be more severely unwell (than the general population) if they do contract Covid-19.

The World Health Organisation has stated that "there is no evidence that pregnant women present with different signs or symptoms or are at higher risk of severe illness. So far, there is no evidence on mother-to-child transmission when infection manifests in the third trimester"

For anyone pregnant, some good places to get more information are the World Health Organisation, the Royal College of Obstetricians and the Australian Government department of Health.

So that you don't have to leave your home, it's possible to access Telehealth video calls with a GP or other health professional so you can have your questions answered.

For mental health support, PANDA (panda.org.au) has recently published a resource for expecting and new parents who are worried or experiencing symptoms of anxiety related to the coronavirus and other global crises and disasters. PANDA's National Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Helpline is



1300-726-306 and the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline is 1300-882-436.

Coronavirus and breastfeeding

The World Health Organisation recommends breastfeeding, particularly in these times. Breast milk is very effective against infectious diseases because it boosts the baby's immune system with antibodies.

If you do contract Covid-19, make sure you're practicing good hygiene by washing your hands regularly and wearing a face mask around your baby.

Coronavirus and birthing in hospitals

Many hospitals are restricting the number of support people allowed during the birth. Check with your care-provider what the current guidelines are.

In some hospitals, only one support person is allowed in, and in some cases they are even restricting access of partners.

Consider home-birth

Many people are considering changing their planned birth place to their home to avoid the potential risk of contracting Coronavirus at a hospital and/or to receive the support they want.

For women with uncomplicated pregnancies who are being cared for by a competent midwife at home, evidence

suggests that homebirth outcomes are as good as or better than outcomes for similar women in a hospital setting.

It is certainly worth considering in these unknown times. You can do a search for homebirth midwives in your area and set up a time to have a call or video chat to ask any questions you may have.

Take time for yourself

Remember that self-care is extremely important. Take time out for yourself, eat as well as possible, rest when you can, avoid too much social media and do more things that bring you joy.

A move to online support

Many people are feeling worried about their birth and postpartum. This is why I created supportive and inspiring online childbirth education. So everyone can feel well supported on their journey and enjoy a positive birth and peaceful postpartum.

Face to face antenatal classes have been cancelled for now, so take a look at my online courses available at www.doulawisdom.com

You deserve to feel confident and calm about birth and beyond. Please reach out for more support.

kirrah@doulawisdom.com
www.doulawisdom.com

LISMORE COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE

Lismore Community Acupuncture is unable to continue during the current situation.

I will recommence as soon as I am able to.

I wish everyone well, please stay safe.

– Brigid Beckett AdvDipAc

Appointments: 0431 702 560



Did you know?

All our links are clickable in the web edition. Visit www.nimbingoodtimes.com and click away!

Defence against pathogens

It does not seem appropriate to write about anything other than the Covid-19 crisis that we find ourselves in. It has turned our lives upside down in ways that we would not have imagined.

Sadly, I have had to suspend Lismore Community Acupuncture, as I could not see a way of keeping everyone safe. I am very sorry for those who were depending on it for various reasons, and hope to see you when some sort of normalcy returns.

Although this is a new virus, in Chinese medicine it can be described traditionally as a strong pathogen.

As seen, it can vary greatly in how severely it affects people. The following description of different responses to a pathogen may be helpful.

Zheng Jong Jing, of the Hun Dynasty, is supposed to have been inspired to study medicine because of an epidemic that wiped out 75% of his clan. He then went on to write the *Shang Hun Lun*, "The treatise on febrile diseases caused by cold". This is still used today. It analyses how cold can penetrate the body and cause diseases at different levels.

According to this reference, the first level occurs when there is an invasion of wind cold through the channels transversing the neck and upper back. Therefore it is important to keep the neck and upper body protected from the cold, including when sleeping. This wind cold invading the superficial level causes the familiar symptoms of runny or blocked nose, headache, muscle aches and chills.

With a wind cold invasion, it is important to stay warm. If there is no sweating to start with, sweating needs to be induced to open the pores and expel the pathogen. But I have to emphasise, this should not be done if there is already sweating or else it will make things worse.

There are variations on this pattern. Some individuals are prone to phlegm. Often they have an underlying deficiency of lung and spleen weakness. This manifests as the above but with



by Brigid Beckett

a lot more mucous, either in upper respiratory or lungs

Another more severe variation is wind cold with internal heat, which occurs when there is pre-existing heat. This can be from heating foods, alcohol, cigarettes or from emotional patterns that result in heat from constrained qi.

It can also be caused from a very strong pathogen, producing a strong defence. Symptoms will be more flu-like: a high temperature, severe chills and fever, thirst, sore throat and a loud cough.

Practically, what steps can we take to avoid wind cold conditions? In this case avoidance of the pathogen is of course the most important, and is the correct message to repeat.

However most of us cannot live in an isolated bubble for months. There are ways to maximise strength against pathogens and decrease the chance of disease.

The obvious steps are to keep warm and dry; especially protect the neck and upper body, not get over-tired, sleep and eat well. If a wind cold pathogen is wrongly treated at the early stage the infection can be prolonged. Antibiotics or herbs used inappropriately, paracetamol or even too high doses of Vitamin C can have this effect.

Soldiering on with the flu, which hopefully no-one will do this time, will weaken defensive wei qi and potentially lead to a worse outcome.

If we know there are predispositions or recurrent disease patterns or any ongoing imbalances, address these before cold pathogens make them worse.

One example is if there is a predisposition to phlegm. This can be seen in chronic sinus infections, sore throats, ear infections, or in children, glue ear.

The term "phlegm" in Chinese medicine actually refers to more than mucousy conditions. Many conditions, from digestive problems to insomnia, emotional problems or cysts, can have a phlegm component, and clearing phlegm will improve health significantly. Often there is a dietary component. Too much cold (including raw food and juices) and sweet food is often the culprit.

If there is a predisposition to heat, heating foods including chillies and fried or greasy food should be avoided, also smoking. Likewise, if there are underlying emotional problems, especially frustration and resentment, this can produce internal heat, which will increase the reaction with a strong pathogen.

Although this outbreak of course has to be taken seriously, and there are associated economic and other impacts for everyone, panic or becoming overemotional for extended times will decrease immunity and possibly worsen any symptoms. So it is a wise move to have strategies for keeping calm and positive.

I am very sorry that I cannot be there to support clients through this. But the risks of bringing people together for treatments are too great.

I look forward to seeing everyone again once this is over. Stay well and safe.

Brigid Beckett works at Lismore Community Acupuncture. She can be contacted on 0431-702-560

Natural Law

This is a time of personal, societal and global transformation. Collectively, we are in a cocoon, and in the cocoon, a caterpillar turns to... MUSH! It's true.

Therefore, this mass retreat raises discomfort in the form of unresolved pain and trauma, and limiting beliefs.

The cocoon is a container for metamorphosis, therefore, this is a time where we all can make transformative change and experience healing.

This also applies to institutions and systems. What a gift!

Make the time to retreat. Meditate. Sing. Dance. Paint. Walk and sit in nature – everyday. This is a sacred time.

Notice when discomfort arises for you, and know this is where your unique healing potential exists.

Choosing to sit in the discomfort (mush) and stay present with your heart, harnesses the great potential of this call to stillness.

Stepping off the rat wheel, and setting reasonable limits with technology, will help you to stay in your centre.

This is the Age of Aquarius, the transformation of the collective consciousness. Mother Nature provides undeniable assurance that all is in divine order, as she glows, restores and regenerates – whilst the world retreats.



by Helene Collard

In perfect time (and not before), we will emerge from the cocoon – a miraculous global transformation.

Let's take care of ourselves and each other. With blessings, Helene.

In-person services at Yemaya are suspended due to Covid-19

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Helene Collard is a Culturally Informed Trauma Integrated Healing Facilitator, and a Reiki Teacher & Practitioner. She has been practicing Reiki since 2007 and began sharing and teaching Reiki professionally in 2015. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: www.yemayacentre.com.au or phone 0405-656-797.



Sindarella

naked, and avoided toxic vaccines.

Despite this ideal environment, her dad took to excessive drinking due to unresolved childhood traumas and one night became violent and struck Sindarella's mother. Sensing this was just the beginning, Sindarella's mother packed her bags, took Sindarella and drove to a friend's house.

Several months later her father choked to death. The coroner said the piece of meat he choked on was the size of a fist. Eventually Sindarella's mother dated a charming psychopath, who coincidentally was also a drinker, oh how patterns repeat, and threatened to kill Sindarella's mother if Sindarella wouldn't let him touch her inappropriately.

Eventually in a fit of desperation, Sindarella told her mother what was happening to her but her mother didn't believe her story, sided with the psycho and threw Sindarella out of the house.

Sindarella was highly intelligent, had good survival instincts and knew how to look after herself (mostly). Within a year she had a barista job, shared a small

apartment and was attending part-time psychology study. She met a sweet guy at a party, had a few drinks, she liked him, he was so confident, flashy and had more muscles than she had seen in one place.

Later in her psychology course she would study dark triad traits: narcissism, manipulative attitude and psychopathy, and identify both this guy and the step-father who had abused her as likely candidates.

When he suggested a walk outside, she thought nothing of it and even when he said, "This is my car", no alarm bells rang. Sindarella had to admit she was impressed, he is a prince charming she thought to herself.

"Let's sit for a while" he suggested. They talked for a while and eventually he leaned over and kissed her, she reciprocated the kisses and it felt like a dream, but when things started to escalate she pulled away but he just continued forcefully.

Sindarella started fighting back and repeating no. Before she knew it, he drew back his fist and struck her in the face, Sindarella's brain collided with the inside of her skull

and she temporarily blacked out.

As she awoke, still dazed, she realised she just wanted to survive this abuse, he just kept pounding away, she didn't fight back. She knew he would beat her to death to get his way. She shrank to nothing. When he had come, he pulled out of her, zipped up and they exited the vehicle.

Sindarella just got on with her life, never reported the crime, like many sexual assault survivors, took regular MMA (mixed martial arts) classes, and went to therapy once a fortnight. Initially, of course, Sindarella did blame herself, her dress, her drinking, the kissing, but then she realised he would have raped her: sober, in trade overalls and without any attraction signal at all, and quite frankly she refused to be defined by some arsehole's violent behaviour and misogyny.

She had realised the hard way, and after many years of study, not to judge a book by its cover and that the most important thing to understand about another person was not their superficial image and material assets but how their mind functioned, their previous traumas, their habits and patterns, their emotional intelligence and how they treated other people all of which takes time. She decided to work on her own life for a while, after all a



by Cameron Storey

man was an optional extra.

One day while walking in the city she saw her rapist, she walked straight up to him and said, "I've thought a lot about you over the past few years."

"Oh," he said with pride.

"And," she continued, "I just wanted to say goodbye properly."

She leaned in toward his mouth with hers, rang her fingers up into his hair, told him to close his eyes, interlocked her fingers behind his head and slammed his head into her upward driving knee.

As he looked up from the floor in stunned amazement, she said, "Just be happy I don't rape you as well." She lived happily (mostly) ever after.