

Face masks for all may slow Coronavirus

by Robert Zandstra

In the Czech Republic, the #Masks4All movement is promoting the making and wearing of homemade face masks.

The core of the initiative is a citizen DIY movement, not unlike the WW2 victory gardens, which could and should be promoted in Australia, making millions of masks in short order for us all to wear.

The following links go to videos that give a rationale for wearing masks, and instructions for making them at home.

- Peak Prosperity's co-founder Chris Martenson highlights the vital importance of wearing masks, in A Simple Way To Combat Coronavirus: Everyone Should Wear A Mask! 34

- minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN3BWaEH3tY>
- A simple explainer: How to Significantly Slow Coronavirus? #Masks4All, 3.5 minute video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhNo_IOPOtU
 - How to make them: Face Masks for All – Slowing the spread of Coronavirus infection with homemade DIY masks, 7 minute video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFmaSNP6_z4
 - 'Face Masks for All' was inspired by: Masks and Critical Thinking – Why homemade masks really work against coronavirus, 6 minute video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_8hojsF-nY



Photo courtesy Lori King, The Blade

Tiny homes powered by solar

by R.Ryall
Rainbow Power Company

Decided to power your tiny home with the sun? Smart choice! Solar power is now the cheapest most abundant energy source in the world.

There are, however, several important considerations.

Tiny home solar power components

Panels – these harvest the power of the sun, in the form of watts.

Batteries – these store the power in the form of Ampere hours – usually 12, 24 or 48Volt options.

Inverter – this takes the stored battery power from low voltage (DC) to 240 volts (AC) allowing you to use the same appliances as you would in a regular grid connected house.

Tiny homes can be run on only 12V (or 24V) DC, negating the need for an inverter and maximizing the amount of energy available from the batteries. However, you need special 12v appliances, as the plug size is different and won't fit in a 'normal' 240v outlet.

While it will be cheaper in the short term to choose a 12v system, the appliances you require are more expensive, and 12v systems are reasonably difficult and expensive to increase in capacity.

There are also other factors that need to be considered:

Weight of panels

Traditionally, residential solar panels are mounted on the roof, maximizing solar exposure and utilizing unused space. This mounting method is simple and cost effective, however it may not be the most suitable for the tiny house dweller. Mounting on the roof will add weight, and also impact where you park your tiny home.

Solar panels should be placed in an area of high solar exposure, with consideration to the aspect (i.e. north east), maximizing the hours of sun exposure each day. Parked in full sun may not be what you consider the ideal placement for your tiny house. Your off grid designer will be able to customize a solution for you that might include a trailer or a ground mounted array.

If you choose ground or trailer mounting for your solar panels, you will have greater control over sun exposure, meaning you can park your tiny house in a cool and shady spot in the summer while your panels bake out in the sun, harvesting the good stuff for your consumption. Choosing the best placement for your solar panels is easy using our solar path finder.



Weight of batteries

You will choose batteries for your tiny home based on the capacity of your solar panels to harvest power, and the amount of power you need access to, based on your household energy consumption.

The greater your power consumption, the more stored power you need and therefore the larger batteries required.

It is important to factor in the weight of the batteries and the need for secure storage, safe from rodents and the weather.

Household energy consumption

If you are going tiny after having lived in a standard size, grid connected home, you may need to consider your power consumption, your habits, and your lifestyle.

For most people living with residential solar, kettles and toasters are relics of a past life.

Living with solar requires you to change the way you think about and consume power. What is a need and what is a luxury? Most of us will nominate a fridge, good lighting, phones and computers as required tools for our existence.

Thankfully, a well-chosen power system will facilitate the use of these, and other appliances, ensuring we can live comfortably and not feel we are missing out.

Back-up options

The greatest fear for many looking to change to solar is enduring endless days of rain and power restrictions. It is important to understand that we do live with unpredictable weather patterns in Australia, and also that the sun spends less time in the sky during winter and has a lower trajectory.

Thankfully, your tiny home gives you the edge over permanent stand-alone solar dwellings. An affordable and

simple way to ensure back up power for your tiny house is to go hybrid by installing an option to plug in to mains power, much like a regular motorhome or caravan.

This allows you to sit out long periods of inclement weather, by moving to a caravan park or campsite, or accessing the grid through friends or family.

Alternatively, you may consider a small generator and battery charger for back-up. A generator is also useful for those times of increased power requirements, such as for running a vacuum cleaner or electric tools.

Living with solar weekend workshops

Rainbow Power Company runs weekend workshops to help you to understand the relationship between amps, watts and voltage; allowing you to examine your power usage and choose appropriate lighting and appliances to suit your system and your lifestyle.

Buying a complete tiny house solar kit from Rainbow Power Company qualifies you for free participation in this informative and educational course.

Rainbow Power Company has designed hundreds of solar systems for tiny homes. Most popular are their two-panel 'solo eco-warrior', four-panel 'eco-warrior family size' and the six-panel 'eco-warrior deluxe'.

These tiny home solar kits have been designed to include everything needed to power those tiny house dreams. Installation instructions and manuals are included, as well as full support and after-sales care through Rainbow Power Company, a trusted authority on solar for over 33 years.

RPC is considered an essential service, and we assure our customers that we will continue to be here for them in these challenging times. Phone (02) 6689-1430 or visit: rpc.com.au

TP or not TP?

I remember as a child being taught to conserve the toilet paper (TP) by my mum.

She had the opinion that by scrunching it up into a ball it would be somehow stronger and harder to accidentally break through with your finger and you could use less.

I wasn't convinced, and being terribly afraid of my own shit I used to take the roll and circumnavigate my left hand until it was a wad of tissue about an inch thick, then do that again 'til there was no more sign of a "streak".

I wondered why there always seemed to be work going on outside our house on the sewers...! I probably contributed half the pile of woodchips at the mill I later protested against as a young forest blockader. It wasn't until I had the opportunity to travel overseas that I became enlightened to the role of water in cleaning ones arse.

If the whole world had the same toilet paper addiction as we Aussies seem to have, the world would run out of trees in no time. Yes, trees are used to produce toilet paper... and the chip mills in Australia contribute much of the 80% hardwood required for TP pulp production.

We know that not all of that comes from plantation, so we are literally wiping our collective arse holes with native forests. Great work Aussies, desperately trying to throw that last straw upon the camel's back. Chlorine-based bleaches are often used to whiten virgin brands of TP, resulting in yet another environmental threat caused by the use of non recycled TP.

Thankfully, much of the planet use water for their daily ablutions. I have adopted a hybrid approach whereby a minimal use of recycled TP can be used first, preferably three sheets folded, not scrunched. This is employed to relieve yourself of any "dags" or larger pieces of unwanted anal furniture.

These can be greatly reduced by spreading your



View from the loo
by Stuart McConville

cheeks slightly as you sit, thereby creating a fairway between you and the splashdown or black hole in my case (I have a compost loo).

The next part of the process may differ by your own preference, but I can recommend the use of a water bottle with a large looped handle to pour over your backside using your right hand, whilst gently cleaning the minimal residues with the left. If you can manage a streakless event, what I call a "Prince William", then you are doing very well indeed.

In fact, a series of these perfect movements probably means you have royal blood in your veins. Of course it should go without mention that thorough hand washing afterwards is always necessary.

The other approach is to go up-market and install a bidet or Egyptian jet system. The latter consists of a small pipe that is conveniently located to squirt water at the touch of a button or flick of a valve. I once concocted a working device using a car windscreen washer bottle and pump with a 12v battery.

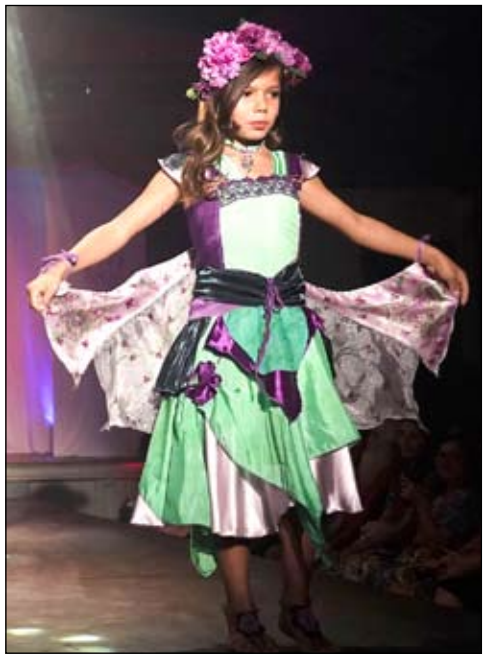
If this all seems a bit much then ask yourself this question: If someone shat on your kitchen table would you be happy to wipe it up with paper alone? I think not. Let's all treat our bodies to a clean bum and get those brown-eyes pink again.

Stuart runs Pooh Solutions compost toilets and consultancy, 0427-897-496 www.poohsolutions.com

Raw toilet paper for sale \$20



Some assembly required



Impressive fashion show raises funds

by Yvonne Campbell

From high fashion to wearable arts, the 2020 Nimbin Fashion Show had it all. Despite a last minute shift of date, and with looming large event closures due to coronavirus, local organisers pulled off a spectacular Saturday night show on 14th March, which played to a packed house. Sponsored this year by the Hemp Embassy, the Chamber of Commerce, Nimbin Hills Real Estate and Summerland Credit Union, and proudly supported by the Nimbin School of Arts, this annual Fashion Show has become an important showcase event on Nimbin village's calendar. Superbly organised each year by talented local, Samara Burcher and a dedicated team as a fundraiser for the Town Hall, Nimbin Fashion Show brings together an outstanding array of local designers, captured this year by local photographer Donatella Parisini. At a time when interest in home-grown, hyper-local products and services has never been stronger, the line-up of 17 designers definitely didn't disappoint, with everything from the enduring and timeless elegance of Poppi's gown collection to the incredibly detailed fantasy suite of leather armour in ox blood from Cobbler John. Under the professional and careful guidance of compere Teresa Biscoe, models strutted their stuff in stunning hand-woven hemp gowns by local girl, Juliska – who has worked with the likes of George Gross and Harry Who – through to stunning evening gowns of the 1900s to 1930s from the extremely



Photos: Donatella Parisini, Ana Jol and Bongo Patterson



talented Kerry Hagan. In between, the diversity in the collections ranged from eclectic to traditional and back again. One of the most iconic garments in the history of fashion, the kimono was sensitively represented in the work of Miki Kobayashi's Kanzashi – Rainbow Kimono Generation, a project which began three years ago with the aim of awakening the spirits of the kimono from decades of sleep. Keeley Patch showed her Koda in Crimson brand of conceptualised couture for the first

time after Keeley's one-of-a-kind range was launched late last year. Textile artist Miss Marto's range of wearable art and accessories under the experimental streetwear label Spunkhyde delighted the audience. Featuring sublimation prints by graffiti artist Brian Itch and graphic design Brael Williams, her collection has been influenced by her recent completion of a diploma in live production and costume. Event organiser Samara Burcher thanked the Nimbin community for their ongoing

support of the Nimbin Fashion Show. "The designers really went above and beyond this year in terms of their designs and having Crystal Grid Productions helped lift the show beyond our expectations," she said. "The sets, the sound, lighting and production overall combined to produce a fantastic show and the feedback we have received certainly reflected that." "It was great to see the local community turn out in such large numbers to support this non-profit event, and in doing so raise funds for the Nimbin Town Hall."

Gig Guide – What's NOT on for the foreseeable future

So many events have been postponed or cancelled that it's safest to assume that nothing is on. With no pubs or clubs open and public halls closed, there are no gigs or live entertainment to enjoy, and with all galleries (see centre pages for detail) and cinemas closed, there's no visual arts to view either, off-line. As a service to our readers, here's a list of major local events that we won't be seeing, live or on the net, as scheduled.

Byron Bluesfest
The 31st annual Bluesfest, set down for this Easter, 9-13th April has been cancelled. Festival director Peter Noble said, "I have never experienced such a dire situation. We will find a way to continue and present in 2021. It has not been easy and we are still in what is a lengthy

process working out the details. "Representatives from our insurance companies have advised that our claim is being processed and ticket refunds, or the option to roll over to Bluesfest 2021 will be available soon. "We will constantly keep our patrons updated in this area and thank them all for the patience they have shown. In the meantime, we wish you all good health and to remain strong and positive in these very trying times."

NORPA shows
All performances at NORPA and Lismore City Hall up to 30th April have been cancelled or postponed as follows:
Cancelled: The Choir of Man, Friday 3rd April.
Postponed: Taylor Henderson, Saturday 18th April and World of Musicals, Sunday 17th May. New dates to be confirmed.

NORPA will advise via email and social media if there are changes to any other performances.
Nimbin MardiGrass
MardiGrass Organising Body (MOB) head gnome Kath said, "We've reluctantly decided to postpone this year's MardiGrass planned for 1st-3rd May, due to the uncertain times surrounding the Coronavirus." The plan is to let things settle and move the dates forward once we all are in the clear. Tickets purchased will be fully refunded or carried over to the next MardiGrass. Kath said, "Hopefully we'll see you all later in the year, or at the worst, May 2021. We plan to do some MardiGrass events online over the Mayday weekend, so keep an eye out for that as we go truly global."

Renew Fest
Australia's annual festival of full-system regenerative change, Renew Fest, has been postponed, and the festival will no longer be held in May. The new dates are 20th-22nd November, subject to confirmation, at the same venue, the Fig Tree Grove in Mullumbimby Showground. In mid-February, Renew Fest ran a one-week early bird ticket crowdfunding campaign. The community response was huge, and they sold over 700 tickets, going well beyond their goal of 600 required to ensure that the festival could go ahead this year. All early bird tickets and donations from the Pozible crowdfunding campaign will carry over to the new festival dates. Refunds are also possible. Renew Fest director Ella Rose Goninan said, "Our hearts extend out to everyone, especially the most

vulnerable amongst us, and those on the frontline of healthcare."
Splendour in the Grass
The 20th anniversary of Splendour in the Grass, set down for 24-26th July at North Byron Parklands, has been rescheduled to Friday 23rd, Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th October 2020. All tickets purchased for the original Splendour dates are valid for entry on the new October dates. Ticket holders who are not able to attend the new dates will be able to apply for a refund from Moshtix. Moshtix will be in touch with all account holders directly. Flume, The Strokes and Tyler, The Creator have all confirmed their attendance for these new dates, alongside most others. On their website, organisers say: "We will present the Splendour experience you all know and love – a one-off Spring edition."

Repression of journalists has hallmarks of fascism

by Warwick Fry

“We are living through bad times,” says the old crone, nodding wisely as thugs come into the beachfront cabana bar to threaten a couple of her grandchildren who were laughing and mocking a TV ad for the fascist ARENA party.

This is one of the most telling segments of Oliver Stone’s 1980s movie *Salvador*, a ‘ficumentary’ treatment of the beginnings of El Salvador’s 12-year civil war. A tiny place, remote in time and distance from our ‘lucky’ country and distantly superannuated governments and generations.

I copped a piece of this resentment from an X generation relative: “El Salvador is not the centre of the world.” Perhaps not, but the US thought it important enough to throw two million dollars a day for 12 years at this tiny guerrilla insurrection supported by a victimised people. (A bit like East Timor).

Hence a resentment that I say is thuggish. I remember in San Salvador seeing bumper stickers saying: “Be a patriot. Kill a priest.” (Progressive priests were critical of the government and military repression, and involved in social programs).

The movie *Salvador* to me (having lived some of the experiences depicted) represents modern fascism. Australians seem to think they are immune to being fascist. But that is to misunderstand.



Julian Assange

Abbott, Morrison, Dutton. “We are living through bad times.” Worse times are to come. Raids on the ABC for doing a story exposing war crimes by Australian SAS forces in Afghanistan. A six-year trial of Julian Assange that was not a trial, but a preparation for a trial that is a travesty of legal precedent, designed to break the man. Chelsea Manning who decided to be a woman, rather than break. Collaery... not a jackboot victim of aussie-aussie-aussie yoyo fascism... yet. But getting close.

For a QC (Collaery was the Attorney General of the ACT) to have his office raided by ASIS, his staff forced to lie face down, his documents seized, his ceiling searched (bugged?) because he defended a client who blew a whistle. Passports suspended.

Why? So that they would not give evidence to the Hague Court that Australian Security services

bugged the offices where the economic violence being committed against the (little) Timorese people in the transactions of the Timor Gap gas and oil transactions. It was evidence of commercial rape.

Take Max Blumenthal (a kind of American John Pilger or Alan Nairn). I worked with his research team in Nicaragua, 2018 when there was an attempted coup supported by the mainstream media. We exposed the invented human rights figures.

He was arrested a year later at a demonstration in front of the Venezuelan Embassy in the US. Not for something he had done at that particular demonstration. It was for an invented charge for something he was supposed to have done three months earlier.

The charge had been dropped, but was re-activated at that particular demonstration. He was held for three days without access to a lawyer or bail.



Chelsea Manning



Max Blumenthal

Independent journalists are becoming increasingly targeted for when they might actually make a difference.

Australians may not believe that they are fascist. But recent governments have all the attributes. In the next two or three months, let us see whether the effects of

the hundreds of billions of dollars suddenly discovered to throw at a world problem will fend off the kind of economic depression of the 1930s and World War 2. And how world governments will respond.

Maybe not jackboots. Probably Kevlon. Hopefully tazers, rather than revolvers. Not optimistic, me.

Linked dangers to civilisation

by John Scales Avery

Cultural evolution depends on the non-genetic storage, transmission, diffusion and utilisation of information.

The development of human speech, the invention of writing, the development of paper and printing, and finally, in modern times, computers and the internet: all these have been crucial steps in society’s explosive accumulation of information and knowledge. Human cultural evolution proceeds at a constantly-accelerating speed, so great in fact that it threatens to shake society to pieces.

The strong contrast between the slow rate of genetic change and the lightning-like, constantly accelerating rate of cultural change means that we face the serious problems of today with an emotional nature that has changed little since our ancestors lived in small tribes, competing for territory on the grasslands of Africa. It is not surprising that human nature still contains an element of tribalism, to which militarists can all too easily appeal.

Within cultural evolution, there are also contrasting rates of change. Science and technology move extremely rapidly, compared with the slow rate of change of our institutions and habits. This is part of the explanation of our inadequate response to the dangers of catastrophic climate change and thermonuclear war.

Thus, while the explosive growth of knowledge has brought many benefits, the problem of achieving

a stable, peaceful and sustainable world remains serious, challenging and unsolved.

Some of the main dangers that we face today are: the Covid-19 pandemic; catastrophic climate change; militarism and thermonuclear war; widespread famine; the global refugee crisis; the growth of neo-fascism; loss of biodiversity; and economic inequality.

These dangers are linked to each other in various ways.

I think that there are some obvious links between militarism and the climate crisis. The almost unimaginable amount of money spent on military budgets and wars could instead be spent on the urgent task of building renewable energy infrastructure.

Part of this vast river of money now wasted, or worse than wasted on militarism, could provide universal primary health care to all the world’s peoples. Together with this care, women could be given the materials and information needed for family planning, thus helping to stabilise the global population of humans. Exploding populations are one of the causes of both the climate crisis and wars.

Furthermore, wars are enormously environmentally destructive. Besides involving enormous fossil fuel consumption, wars do direct damage to the environment. We all remember the deforestation produced by the use of agent orange in the Vietnam War, and the oil spills that resulted from wars in the Middle East.

Wars and climate change are linked to the global refugee crisis, and the refugee crisis is in turn linked to swings to the right in politics, and the growth of neo-fascism. In Europe, Hungary, which is experiencing a flood of refugees from wars in the Middle East, now has a highly authoritarian government.

The growth of neo-fascist far right parties throughout Europe is due to the refugee crisis. In the United States, the far-right, neo-fascist, racist, anti-immigrant government of Donald Trump was voted into power by people who feared that their jobs would be taken by migrants. Something similar can be said about Brexit.

Many of the serious threats that the world faces today are linked to excessive economic inequality. For example, both climate change and militarism are linked to the greed of corporations, whose disproportionate power derives from their extreme wealth. The loss of democratic institutions is also linked to excessive economic inequality.

As Professor Noam Chomsky has pointed out, the laws of corporations do not allow their CEOs to have either an ecological conscience or a social conscience. Their only duty is to maximise the profits of the stockholders. If they do not do this, then, by law, they must be replaced. We can remember that Mussolini defined fascism as “corporatism”.

In the United States, the popular Democratic presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, has strongly criticised excessive economic inequality and corporate power,



John Scales Avery

and proposed a wealth tax. It is interesting that Bernie Sanders says that he is a democratic socialist. When asked to explain exactly what he means by that, he says the he believes that the United States would benefit from the type of social and economic system that we can observe today in the Scandinavian countries.

In Denmark, for example, high progressive income taxes have very much reduced economic inequality, so that poverty has been virtually eliminated. These high taxes are used to provide free health care and free education, including free university education for those who qualify. These reforms are what Sanders advocates for the United States.

In Denmark and other Scandinavian countries, corporations and the free market still exist, but they are strongly regulated. It is interesting to notice that the Scandinavian countries are leaders

in renewable energy programs and in reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

In conclusion, let me say that many of the serious dangers that we face today can be addressed by reforming our economic systems. Greed-sanctioning and growth-worshipping economics, the economics that has led to intolerable economic inequality, must be replaced by steady-state economics, and with the reforms that we can observe in present-day Scandinavia.

John Scales Avery’s new book, *Linked Dangers to Civilization* is freely downloadable at: <http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Linked-Dangers-to-Civilization-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

Other books and articles about global problems are at: <https://wsimag.com/authors/716-john-scales-avery>

Hippies adjust to virus lockdowns

by Michael Balderstone

Cannabis sales are busting records in North America and dispensaries deemed “essential”, along with pharmacies, grocery stores, banks, etc. And what better company if you are in lockdown or stay at home orders is there than weed? For some of us anyway!

The drug against all wars. The drug that lets you have a party for one in your head. The drug that fertilises your imagination and creativity. That gave us the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* saying, “it’s better to run out of money than run out of weed”!

It’s estimated there are 55 million Cannabis users in America with just over three million state legal medical patients. States with legal recreational weed have been deemed essential also, as it seems that country at least has accepted it as a valid medicine.

Home delivery over there is booming with weed and like so many other things now, can be paid for online with your chosen strain delivered to your door in minutes if you live close to a dispensary.

Turnover in some dispensaries in America trebled and more before shutdowns. What do people really want when the crunch comes?

For many, pot is a real need as much as any other medication or supplement. And who wants to listen to endless Corona news when



Aussie spokesman responds to questions about coping with quarantine after returning from overseas: “I’m just gonna lock myself in, get on the Playstation and punch some cones for a couple of weeks.”

there’s weed and Netflix, said one lark.

And for the hippies in the hills who’ve been building gardens for decades now it all makes sense. We knew something had to give, we all knew that. An environmental disaster, disease, war, we all knew something was going to happen, didn’t we?

I actually lived on Patmos for two years, where *Revelations* was written, and of course the apocalypse is part of all the hippy dreamings in some abstract way because it never made much sense, except we knew it did also!

Change is necessary, that’s all we knew. Hopefully this is the wake-up call: we need to reset our values and remember where we live.

We postponed MardiGrass, and who knows when it will next happen. Definitely something related will happen on-line on the first weekend in May, and if you want to be involved get in ‘touch’.

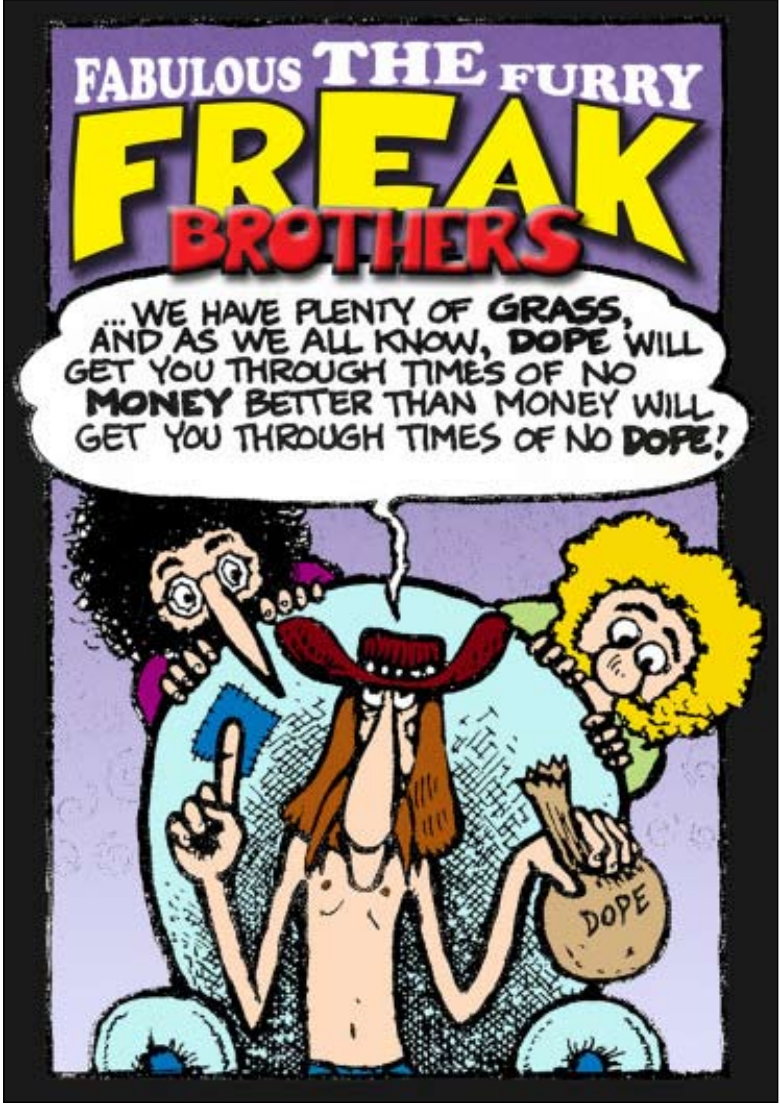
Some rules may have changed by the Mayday weekend. It might be less strict, or stricter. Who will be left alive? So far, only the over-fifties bong throw looks in trouble, but I’m no virus expert.

The Nimbin street feels like we’re back in the seventies, so some people must surely like it. The HEMP Embassy shop is closed, but we’re aiming to keep the Hemp Bar open for takeaways and the homeless. It’s a community thing.

A Medican gathering will happen again soon we hope, but not sure when. The HEMP Embassy is collecting Medical Cannabis testimonials and if you have a story to tell we would love to hear it, please. Email it to: head@hempembassy.net

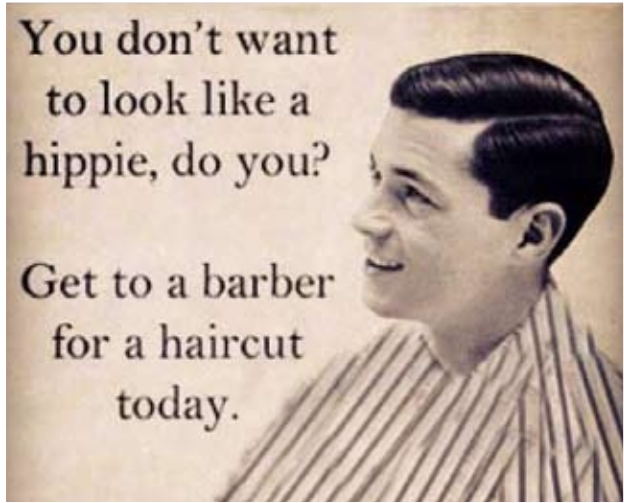
A lot of people are asking, or saying, Cannabis is good for the immune system, isn’t it? Some say it is, though smoking may not be the best way to get it into your body. It certainly helps to maintain homeostasis through the recently discovered endocannabinoid system which is throughout our bodies.

One thing is for sure, it can be



good for relaxing. Chilling out. Losing stress. Not worrying. Curbing anxiety.

It doesn’t work for everyone like that, but if you are one of those people, your time has come!



SoMo believes in prayer and is very earnest about it. He certainly believes the apocalypse is upon us and who am I to judge? Not like he does anyway. “Dirty druggies, you should go back to them Bethany before Corona wipes out the tribe. Does anyone ever wash their hands up there? Do they even have hot water?” We both knew he was dumping on me, but I fled Canberra as soon as the panic began anyway. Pipe’s camp, high in the hills and removed from the mainstream, was ideal I thought, but so did plenty of others. Over the 40-odd years since hippies planted the first fruit trees up here, hundreds have spent time on the mountain, sometimes just for a few weeks or a summer, others for years before the world drew them back for various reasons.

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast’s longest serving covert

A few of the older faeries have called the camp home since the beginning but none have lived here all the time. Armageddon and the apocalypse have been regular topics around the campfire forever. Mushroom visions of the future created the camp as much as any other reason. Everybody knew change had to happen. The world couldn’t keep going endlessly like it has been. So when Corona news filtered through, it was no surprise at first but a few weeks later there is a dawning that life will never be the same again. This is the real deal, as Pipe keeps saying to new arrivals. Closing the Queensland border stopped some of the trickle, but almost 30 new faces along with mine have turned up in the last month. Some brought nothing but the clothes on their backs, while others lugged sacks of rice and lentils. We won’t run out of food and this would have to be the healthiest little enclave in the country, yet a ripple of fear exists in the air that was never there before. “Everyone’s on edge with words like mandatory vaccinations,” said dreadlocked Vera, named for the hundreds of metres of Aloes she planted along the edge of the main garden. “We knew something would happen, but who knows where this will end up.” Pipe seems unfazed by it all and insists we are so healthy

here it shouldn’t be a huge drama. He wonders why no-one from the government talks about good food to keep your immune system strong. Diet just doesn’t make it to what’s important for health, he keeps saying. “Let your food be your medicine and medicine your food. Could it be any simpler?” I did once try to show ScoMo how important what you eat is, but he’s fed like a king anyway and doesn’t do takeaways or Maccas, like his subjects. Much more important to keep haircuts available at this time anyway. “We can’t have people turning into hippies Bethany.” Just the fact that I hang around Nimbin and have Nimbin mates made him want me to leave Canberra. I asked him why and he stumbled around in circles, embarrassed and awkward. “People are dirty there,” the words finally fell out. “What do you mean dirty sir, we’re all made of dirt aren’t we?” That horrified him. He stared at me like a lunatic. “People don’t wash enough there. Druggies are dirty, come on Bethany, you know it’s true.” I couldn’t really argue with that, having spent months on the street undacuva. We used to be able to get a shower in the Museum, but since that burnt down there’s only the creek and in the drought it was only waterholes, which were pretty smelly by the time the rains came. So I’m back up in hills, but I have no doubt the Bin will do better than most villages simply because we love dirt so much. My mother taught me that. “If you don’t let your children play in the dirt, their immune system will never develop.” I can hear her now as if it was yesterday.

TRIBAL MAGIC

Alternative Department Store

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