



Tid Bits

By Michelle Padovan

Sniffing out the flu

Customs officials at Manchester Airport are using trained sniffer dogs as part of the battle to ensure the bird flu does not enter Britain. Two dogs currently check flights from Turkey and Romania where outbreaks of the Avian flu have been reported. Gatwick and Heathrow also have three dogs doing the rounds. They search for banned meat, poultry and produce, feathers and eggs. Hopefully the sniffing will halt the sniffing.

People give animals allergies

On the subject of sniffing, for years we've been told that pets can cause allergies in humans. However, Edinburgh based Royal School of Veterinary Science clinicians have discovered that we can cause allergies in our pets. Vets say that cigarette smoke, human dandruff and dusty houses can

contribute to feline asthma. Certain types of cat litter and pollen brought into the home can also contribute to the problem. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath.

Dog owners are social animals

Recent studies presented at the Urban Animal Management conference in Canberra confirm what dog walkers have known all along—that walking your dog in a park makes us more social. Urban policy analyst and town planner, Virginia Jackson, researched regular dog walkers. She found that 50% of dog owners report that they always or mostly talk to other dog owners. 96% of respondents also said they would say hello to someone they met at a dog park if they saw them in a shopping centre or in the street. Jackson says that this important social connection within the community is not yet recognised by most social and urban planners.

Bow WOW!

The 'Wonderful Openhearted Wagon'-WOW-is the new concept vehicle for dog owners designed by Japanese vehicle maker Honda. It features a convertible glove box/kennel for smaller breeds, pop up crates in the rear and specialised seat belts for larger breeds. Designed to tackle problems associated with motor travel, forward folding seats prevents climbing in the front and hair shedding on seats. Removable/washable flooring, built in water bowls and an accessory compartment for leads and brushes makes for a hassle free journey. Whilst not intended for commercial sale, the WOW concept reflects the growing dog friendly demand. Honda expects to have a similar model go into production and in the meantime is introducing a line of 'travel dog' motoring accessories such as seat harnesses and electric blankets.

Still in Japan...

The Environment Ministry is moving to make microchipping dangerous animals mandatory. This follows a recent spate of species like pythons, crocodiles and giant salamanders being found wandering loose in city and urban areas. Unusual animals, especially reptiles have become increasingly popular as pets. Among the animals included in the proposed law are various snakes, snapping turtles and bears. A recent incident involved a python that fled a park and his napping owner.

No children, but canines get the welcome mat

Austrian hotel owner, Roland Ballner, will welcome dogs to stay in his establishment but young children will be banned. His new policy will take effect early next year. It seems dogs are well behaved and welcome guests whilst children have caused havoc running, screaming and drawing on walls and furniture. The hotelier believes the policy will not affect business. We wonder whether the turn-down service at the Hotel Cortisan will include liver treats on the pillows.

Only in Queensland—Stop or I'll Squawk!

Geese are on patrol on Queensland's Sunshine Coast with produce agencies and pet stores experiencing a rise in the

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(healthy)

(hungry!)



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demand for 'watch geese'. A cost effective alternative to the conventional guard dog, geese are low maintenance, cheaper to feed and even help cut down on your mowing chores. Patrolling backyards and commercial property, geese are armed with a territorial and savage nature, possessing serrated bills and a deafening squawk. Brisbane residents have reported seeing geese on duty at a council bus depot and breeders are busy keeping up with the demand.

The mop-up after Katrina

We're happy to report that the New Orleans Zoo only had a few casualties. Up to 12 zoo staff lived at the zoo to ensure the animals were well cared for and kept fed. Casualties included two river otters, a missing alligator and a Flamingo that was traumatised but has since recovered. Unfortunately the city's world-class aquarium did not fare as well-with over half the fish perishing.

KENNEL CABLE - The Animal Lovers TV Guide

ANIMAL PLANET

Animal Planet at the movies

This 13 part series takes you onto the sets of some big Hollywood blockbusters. Meet the professionals behind the training of animal stars. Each episode includes anecdotes from the actors and directors involved in the film and their experiences of working alongside the furred, fanged and feathered stars. From Dec 7 Wednesdays at 6:30pm (AEDST)

'Techno Wolves'

What is it like to be a wolf? How do they establish territories and communicate with each other? How do they learn the hunting skills vital for survival? Across America, pioneering projects are applying cutting-edge science to return wolves to the wild. But can technologically developed models help us understand the life of a wild animal? To find out, Sir David Attenborough puts man-made techno-wolves' to the test to see if they still have the skills to survive in their natural territories across North America. Saturday Nov 12 at 7pm (AEDST)

'Winning Dads'

What does it take to be a good dad in the wild? Why does a male baboon risk his life defending his kids, while a hippo bull carelessly tramples on his young? Why does the bullfrog dig a trench to bring life-saving water to his tadpoles, while the mole rat expects his young to guard him with their lives? Nature is full of surprises as host Sir David Attenborough discovers in this half-hour special from the BBC's Natural History Unit. Saturday Nov 19 at 6:30pm (AEDST)

'Hurricane Katrina Rescues'

Over 50,000 animals were caught up in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, trapped helplessly in amongst the ruins or half-drowned in unfamiliar territory, kilometres from their owners. Fortunately, amongst the chaos there were hundreds of unsung heroes who dropped everything to assist these victims. Following humane agencies such as the ASPCA, witness the tireless commitment of animal welfare officers and volunteers as they struggle to rescue, treat, house and reunite animals of all types. Sunday Dec 18 at 6:30pm (AEDST)

Day care & party animals

Last edition we reported that there is a growing trend to doggie day care with various facilities springing up all over Sydney. Canine Playtime in Leichhardt will soon be moving to new and improved premises. Look out for new establishments scheduled to open in the new year in Rosebery and Balmain. Talking of New Year, Furkidz day care are holding a NYE party for fireworks-dog-fraidy-cats. It's designed to keep the fur kids entertained and away from scary sounds with lots of fun activities planned and a sleep-over (jammies optional). All night party people may also consider sending their pooch along and can collect the little critters at noon on New Year's Day-later pick-up by prior arrangement and will incur an extra fee.

FURKIDZ PAMPERED PET CARE SERVICES

Location: Concord West NYE party: December 31 from 6:30 pm

Price: \$40.00

How to party: Dogs must be vaccinated and well socialised. Activities will include a Rock Around the Clock dancing dog competition, treasure hunt and pooch piñatas.

Phone: 0410 410 834 or Web: www.furkidz.com.au

NANNA'S DOGGY DAY CARE

Location: Canterbury Opening hours: 7:30am to 5:30 pm Mon-Fri

Cost: \$25.00 a day and discounts apply for more than one dog or more than two days booked per week.

What a day en-tails: Gentle, relaxation music is played to soothe the savage beast. Lots of toys are available in the yard for playful dogs and daily organised walks in the park along a river for regular exercise. Extra services like massage, grooming, reiki and pranic healing are charged as an extra fee.

Phone: 0416 003 132

CANINE PLAYTIME

Location: Ashfield (previously Leichhardt) Opening hours: 8:30 am to 5:30 pm Mon-Fri

What the service en-tails: pick up and drop service throughout Inner West areas.

Currently dog walking and exercise with playtime and socialisation activities. New premises will be open early next year and a range of services like grooming will be available. Operator Rowena Crisp has over eight years experience with training and general pet care and Canine Playtime has been operating since February this year.

Phone: 0437 592 005 email: canineplaytime@hotmail.com



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