

THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the latest e-mail-only version of the latest Dream Scene. Printed copies will only be produced later in the summer when people are circulating more freely and businesses are open and hopefully edging towards some form of normality.

Once again the **national government cocked-up** here by announcing that Spain intended to introduce a two-week quarantine for arrivals from abroad, but gave notice four days in advance! When PM Sanchez previously announced the timing for the lock-down of Madrid, the motorways leaving the city areas were packed even at night time and early morning with people leaving for the various coastlines!

By announcing the two-week quarantine of international arrivals last week and **giving several days notice** before implementation, it just gave a 'wink and a nod' to those who wished to travel earlier and to get in before the lockdown!

Amongst the many failures in dealing with Covid-19 here in Spain, three stand out: first, the **lack of transparency** from central government and some of the regions. Secondly the **debacle at care homes** and third, the **lack of** appropriate and frequent **testing** nationally.

Unless you are smoking the wrong sort of weed, you should now be aware that the statistics on the Covid-19 virus offered by the national governments of Spain and the UK (and probably many other countries as well) are grossly understated. **Massaging the various virus figures** is designed to make the various administrations look more efficient, when in reality it just highlights their incompetence and failure to act positively. The lack of PPE nationally is criminal!

As an internet user, you should now be well aware that the deeply flawed responses of the various central governments to the horrific situation in **care/nursing homes**. In March, Australia imposed a "no-visit" lockdown in nursing homes. At the same time they also placed a 14-day quarantine on international arrivals. As a result not one single person in a nursing home or care home has died from Covid-19 in Australia. Not one!

Nationally, regionally and locally, Covid-19 testing in Spain has been practically **non-existent for Joe Public**. The PP mayor of Alicante, Luis Barcala, has complained about the lack of testing in the province, particularly on people who are displaying symptoms of the virus. The Ministry of Health itself already specified in its instructions of March 25 that it was necessary to carry out a diagnosis with PCR **of all people with symptoms**. Mayor Barcala reviewed the

data and highlighted that seven days after the start of confinement, in Castellón tests were carried out on 75% of people with symptoms, in Valencia 45% and in Alicante only 31%. 14 days after the date set by the Government to start the de-escalation, the situation was much worse, because in Castellón the percentage was only 55% of those with symptoms, in Valencia 40% and in Alicante only 30%! Whereas more than a thousand officials of the Alicante City Council have already undergone rapid tests to detect Covid-19; this represents approximately half of the workforce, testing among the general public is non-existent. The tests began only last week with members of the essential services: Local Police, Fire and Social Action personnel. The Alicante City Council acquired some 3,000 quick tests for all municipal officials with an eye toward de-escalation, with an expense of around 75,000 euros - **now that is just €25 per test**, which is minimal! A local council employee told me that a test costs between €75 and €90, which is bolux! Many of the coastal residents in this region are elderly and at risk. However, there has been no selective or local testing - people have just been left to get on with it!

Now with the phased de-escalation of the lock-down, it is difficult to predict if it will cause the Covid cases and deaths to escalate. Maybe not, but the risks of further Covid cases will surely increase after a few weeks with the greater circulation of people.

Some have warned that a second wave of the coronavirus could be worse because it will probably coincide with the start of the flu season, putting even more strain on the various health-care systems.

It was interesting to see that flu vaccinations in Andalucia this year will be **obligatory for all over 65's** and people at risk. What an excellent idea.

Keep safe and keep your distances!

From Mick, Tid and the Dream Scene Team



My wife and I have decided we don't want kids..... We'll be telling them tonight.

LOCAL STUFF!

The **motorhomes** that invaded for many years the first line of coastal coves of Torrevieja may have ceased to be a headache for the City Council, which was trying to find the formula to "expel" them from there. Finally, the solution seems to be the placement of some prohibition signs at the access points and where the motor vehicles are parked. with the warning of large fines. The area of



Calas de Torrevieja was a major problem, as the entire surface area between La Higuera cove and Los Locos beach, where dozens of motorhomes were parked, was taken over with the consequent deterioration of protected fauna and flora.The local council blurred "to end the indiscriminate parking of motorhomes, restoring again the peaceful and natural aspect of one of the best-known areas of the Torrevieja coast." Local Police were ordered to be forceful with the parking ban for all vehicles, denouncing those violators who fail to comply with the rule with sanctions that could go up to 200 euros in some cases. The motorhome owners, mostly foreigners(especially from central and northern Europe), place their chairs, tables, hammocks and even sun loungers, next to the doors of some local residents and deploy satellite dishes to watch TV.

Hidraqua, the company that manages **the sewerage network** of several towns and the treatment plants in Alicante, Orihuela, Benidorm, Torrevieja, Elche, Rojales, Xixona, Elda, Benitaxell, Altea and Gata have reported more than 130 blockages in the sewerage networks, photo, significantly more than during the same period of previous years. We should all know at this stage that non-biodegradable items such as wet wipes and disposable nappies should not be dumped down the toilet. However it now seems that anti-bacterial wipes, face masks and plastic gloves are being flushed down as well! These items must be thrown in the bin, not the toilet!



The **municipal budget of Torrevieja** includes the remuneration of the high positions of authorized officials and general managers which this year will cost the Torrevieja City Council €1,069,000 p.a. plus the payments to social security, an increase of 40% compared to the 2019 financial year (345,000 euros more!). The plenary secretary general, Pilar Vellisca Matamoros , the auditor Jesús López López and the treasurer Ángeles de Beltrán Jaén each receive €109,000 euros per year gross. The Financial Controller is now

the best paid of the entire municipal staff of 700 workers the general director of Human Resources and Recruitment; Rosana Narejos (73,000 euros); the general director of Urbanism, Víctor Costa (100,000 euros) , the general director of Innovation, Javier Míguez and the general director of Economy, Juan Carlos Carmona (87,000 euros) . The whole budget for the municipality amounts to 117 million euros and the new salaries have been harshly criticized by some of the opposition parties. No doubt Orihuela will soon follow!

The Torrevieja council have approved (five months late) the tender specification for the contract for rubbish and cleaning - **€382 million for a 15 year period.**

The Civil Guard has detained a man in Guardamar del Segura who swallowed seven packages of cocaine to prevent them from being found by the agents, shouting '**Don't lock me up!**' - like that would work! The detainee, a 41-year-old Spaniard, faces a crime of drug trafficking and another of an attack on law enforcement officers. Despite the difficulties, the Civil Guard managed to expel two of the wrappers from his mouth, but the other 5 he already had inside his stomach, which led to his subsequent admission to the General Hospital of Torrevieja, for exploration and probably stomach pump. He was then released with charges and is awaiting trial.....so he can now go back to doing what he knows!

The Orihuela City Council is to spend €44,000 in clearing the **Rambla de Cabo Roig**. It is now very overgrown, photo, and needs to be cleared so that the water can flow out during the heavy rainfalls. One would have



thought that this should have been done before the winter rains rather than after, but The council has also approved a new contract for cleaning the beaches in a 16-month contract costing €532,491.43. An additional €97,912 will be spent on the removal of algae. **Blue Flags on the 11 coastal beaches**, as well as five beaches with the Q quality mark, such as Punta Prima, Cala Estaca, Glea, Cala Capitán and Mil



Palmeras.

I have noticed that locally, a lot of the potholes in the roads have been filled in. It will be interesting to see if they will remain filled after the recent heavy rainfall.

Ask any man and he will tell you that any woman's ultimate fantasy is to have two men at once.

While this may have been verified in some recent sociological study, it appears that most men do not realise that in the Jewish version of this fantasy, one man is cooking and the other is cleaning.

IN THE REGIONS



Okay, maybe you wouldn't want to see this in your back garden but it certainly was a welcome sight in north western Spain. This is a brown bear, a protected species, and this is the **first sighting in 150 years** of the animal in this sparsely populated area in Galicia's Ourense province. The area is also home to wolves, wild hogs and deer.

43,956 healthcare workers have been infected with Coronavirus in Spain, says the Health Ministry.

The Spanish Government extended temporary travel restrictions for non EU citizens coming to Spain. The extension is in now in effect and lasted until May 15. The order was originally introduced on March 17 and barred non EU citizens from entering Spain. The Interior Ministry has specified the people that are exempt from this travel ban; these include diplomatic staff and their families, long-term residents, cross-border workers, healthcare professionals and flight personnel. However, this measure still does not apply on the land border with Gibraltar or with Andorra. There is **now a two-week quarantine** for anybody entering Spain.

A 35-year-old man of Brazilian origin has been arrested in Barcelona. The man is believed to be a serial killer who has **murdered four homeless people** in the city, beating them to death with a blunt object. He was arrested shortly after the fourth victim was found. Although the local authorities in the city have provided temporary accommodation for the homeless, many of them would prefer not to live inside, believing that doing so increases their chance of getting the virus. Police have now also extended this enquiry to other European countries.

A picturesque beach, photo, in the Spanish province of Cádiz has been sprayed with **diluted bleach**, in a misguided and environmentally unfriendly attempt to protect children from the coronavirus. "It's totally absurd," said María Dolores Iglesias Benítez, head of a local environmental volunteer group. "The beach is a living ecosystem. And when you spray it down with bleach, you're killing everything you come across." The beach, Zahara de los Atunes, was doused in bleach during late April in preparation for an easing of lockdown measures brought on by the covid-19 pandemic. Speaking to the BBC, local official Agustín



Conejo said the decision to spray the beach with the powerful disinfectant was "a wrong move" and a "mistake," but that it was "done with the best intention" to protect children.

An 82-year-old man was stabbed to death in a street in Bilbao in northern Spain. **An 81-year-old man** in the vicinity **has been arrested** for the crime. What the heck has been going on there?

18 women have been murdered in Spain this year by partners or ex-partners, making a grim total of 1,051 since 2003, when this type of crime began to be recorded separately. Two have happened since Spain's strict lockdown came into force on 14 March. There were 55 femicides last year. In the first two weeks of April alone there was a 47% increase in calls to Spain's domestic violence helpline over the same period last year. The number of women contacting support services, which have been designated as essential by the

government, by email or on social media is said to have increased by as much as 700%. In the Canary Islands, where a 78-year-old woman was murdered in March by her husband, a scheme has been introduced to help women who might not be able to get away from an abusive partner for long enough to get help. A woman can simply go into a chemist and request a **Mascarilla-19 face mask**, the pharmacist then knows to call for help. The scheme has since been extended to other regions in Spain and beyond. According to the EU's gender equality index devised in 2017, Spain scored better on gender violence than France, Denmark, the UK and the EU average, but scored worse than most on failure to disclose, suggesting that reported cases are only the tip of the iceberg.



Day 40 at home and the dog is looking at me like, "See? This is why I chew the furniture!"

Me: Alexa what's the weather this weekend?

Alexa: It doesn't matter... you're not going anywhere.

YOUR HEALTH AND PRIMARY CARE.

Hospital attendances due to heart attacks or mild strokes in the province **have dropped by 40%**. This is not due to healthier people but probably fear of catching the virus in the hospitals. Cardiologists and neurologists at the Alicante General Hospital have detected how people who begin to suffer symptoms of a heart attack or a mild stroke wait hours, or even a day, before going to or calling the Emergency Department. This is a delay that in many cases can cause very serious problems in patients, especially in the case of heart attacks. The usual treatment for these patients is to perform angioplasty, a technique that consists of opening the affected artery and placing a spring or stent to restore blood flow. But for this treatment to be as effective as possible it must be done as soon as possible.

It is a similar case **in the UK**. Just 916,581 people in England attended any kind of accident & emergency unit last month. That was the fewest since records began in 2010 **and is 67% down** on the April 2019 figure. The number of people admitted to hospital in April as an emergency after attending A&E was also the lowest ever, at 326,581 – 39% down on the 535,236 admitted in April 2019. The figures have fuelled concerns that many thousands of people with potentially life-threatening ailments such as heart attack, stroke, sepsis or asthma attack failed to seek care.

More than **22,000 patients** in our province, Alicante, with mild symptoms of coronavirus are being treated at home by family doctors. These are cases that escape the statistics, since these patients do not undergo any type of Covid-19 diagnostic test, unless their health condition worsens and they have to be admitted to the hospital, where they are then tested. Each doctor in the province has been assigned an average of 13 patients, who are at home and are followed by phone. According to this survey, carried out during the week of April 13, each family doctor was following an average of 13 patients with suspected Covid-19, that is, "with respiratory problems". In that week, each doctor visited an average of two homes of patients suspected of having the disease. All the activity is being coordinated these days through the phone, which means that each doctor is making an average of 172 weekly phone calls to their patients. Unfortunately the **switchboards in the health centres are being swamped** with incoming calls forcing more than a third of doctors to use their own mobile phones to call

the patients.

Another problem is that **only 43% of cases each doctor cares for are his/her own patients**. The rest is random. "In this way the concept of longitudinality* is lost, something fundamental in primary care," says María Ángeles Medina, president of the Valencian Society for Family and Community Medicine. (*I assume a better word here is 'continuity'.)

In the early days of the lock-down, **my prescription sheet** for med's had expired. When I called at the *salud* at Cabo Roig, the door was closed and I was told to apply again in a couple of weeks. I was quite happy to buy my drugs for a couple of months, but being online to the portal YO Salud, I decided to send my GP a request to renew the relevant drugs, listing them out. In less than 12 hours he sent me a response saying that all I needed to do now was to go with my card to the *Farmacia* and collect my prescriptions. I did not need a prescription sheet when I collected them. Great service.

Tid had a **blood test** scheduled for May 12, which was set up several months ago. After confirmation with the *salud* that she should still attend, we popped down to the *salud* at 8:15am on the 12th. Although conditions and spacing was perfect within the *salud*, it was obvious that many people waiting outside to be called in, did not understand what a 'metre' is, let alone two! Still, had no problem reminding them! The health portal for appointments etc is at <https://extranetsalud.torrevieja-salud.com/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f>

Spanish Covid-19 Statistics 18/05/20

Cases in Spain:	Deceased:	Recovered:
231,350	27,650	149,576
Cases in Valencia:		
10,914	1,388	9,970
Cases in Alicante Province		
3,802	485	3,662
Cases in Torrevieja Health Area		
464	54	

My good friend, Archibald, showed me this letter he got from Channel 4.

Dear Sir.

On behalf of Channel 4 Television, may I thank you for your application submitted on behalf of your wife for our new reality show. Also, thank you for the charming photograph of her that you enclosed.

Whilst agreeing that she could make a worthy contribution to the programme if selected, I would like to point out that the correct title of the series is actually "Fact Hunt"

Kind regards.....

What's happening elsewhere?

In the US of A, odd, frostbite-like patches are showing up on people's toes — people who have also tested positive for covid-19. "My inbox and my telemedicine clinic are full of just toes. I have never seen so many toes," one dermatologist said. Other peculiar rashes may also be signs of a hidden coronavirus infection, especially in the young.

Covid-19 patients there are reporting the terrible second week of symptoms they experience. People who seem to be handling the infection well suddenly suffer the most severe reactions in days five through 10. There is little consensus among doctors and experts about why that period seems to be so dangerous.

Thousands of U.S. hotels have volunteered to help local authorities house doctors, nurses and other medical personnel at reduced rates — or even free — during the covid-19 pandemic. President Trump's White House has praised these efforts. But so far, none of Trump's own hotels are known to be participating. In five U.S. cities where President Trump's company operates large hotels — New York, Chicago, Miami, Washington and Honolulu — local authorities said the Trump hotel was not involved in their efforts to provide low-cost or no-cost rooms to those fighting the novel coronavirus. Gosh! What a surprise! I'm sure he just forgot.

Instead of paying them more for the hazards they now face, numerous hospitals across **the US have slashed pay for nurses and doctors**. A coronavirus bill Congress passed in March specifically excludes health-care companies from having to give two weeks of paid sick leave. Lawmakers and Trump have praised health-care workers as heroes during the outbreak, but have not approved hazard pay for them.

Three people were charged in the **killing of a dollar-store security guard** in Michigan who told a customer her child had to wear a face mask to enter!

According to a CNN report, there are currently coronavirus cases on **26 US Navy warships**, and another 14 have been hit by the virus but the crew members impacted have recovered.

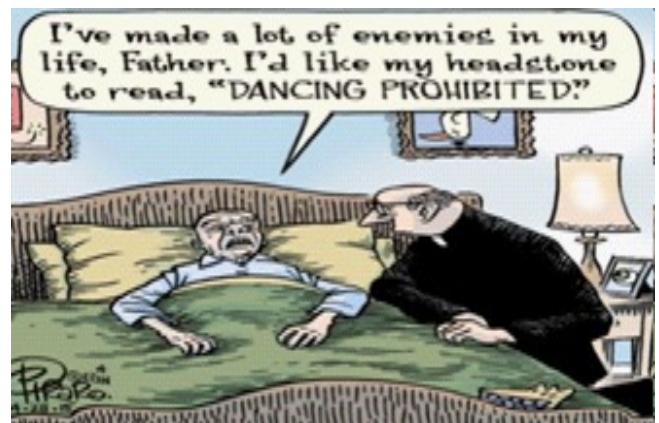
Doctors in the US are reporting that a **mysterious blood-clotting complication** is killing their coronavirus patients. Despite being treated with blood-thinners, which help break down the clots, patients are still developing them in various parts of the body. More and more, physicians are finding that covid-19 is much more than just a respiratory illness. See

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/04/22/coronavirus-blood-clots/>

South Korean scientists have concluded that coronavirus patients cannot relapse after recovering from the disease, despite hundreds of recovered people testing positive again. The new findings suggest that rather than indicating reinfection, the positive results were caused by shortcomings in the standard virus test. The later positive results were caused by shortcomings in the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test that detects the virus's genetic information, or RNA, in samples taken from patients. The test is unable to differentiate between "live" RNA and harmless traces that can remain in the body of someone who has fully recovered. They will greatly reassure governments threatened by the nightmarish prospect of a never-ending cycle of infection and reinfection. **This is very good news if it is true.**

For the second time in five years, **the snowy slopes of Everest** will lie empty and silent. On 11 March, China suspended all climbing expeditions from the Tibetan side due to the coronavirus pandemic. Neighbouring Nepal supported the decision and followed suit, suspending the climbing season on its side of the mountain. Once again, as witnessed in 2015 when devastating earthquakes hit the region, no human being will summit the world's highest peak this season. COVID-19 has had an enormous economic impact across the globe in terms of tourism. Adventure tourism is the backbone of **Nepal's economy**, and this season's shutdown will affect the livelihoods of around a million people. Not only will mountain guides and sherpas be affected, but also those who work in shops, restaurants, transportation, hotels, tea houses, B&Bs and other tourism-related businesses.

In Russia, the French-headquartered home improvement and gardening retailer Leroy Merlin had most of its stores closed by local authorities as there were crowds of people in the stores despite requests from the authorities to self-isolate. I expect much the same here when the big local outlets open.



No baby talk!

First day at school for a new class and the teacher says "OK children, you're now at school. I want you to use proper words for things. A cow is not a moo- moo and a dog is not a woof-woof"

A bit later, the kids go out to play, but Little Johnnie stays in reading. The teacher asks him why he's not going out to play and he replies that he loves reading books. So the teacher tells him he can stay inside and read if he tells the other kids about the book. So after break, the teacher asks Johnny to tell them what book he's been reading.

So Johnny explains "Winnie the Shit"

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

The Correos has a **55,000-strong workforce** in Spain, but **only a quarter** of Spanish post office staff are working during the state of emergency. During the coronavirus lockdown and the state of emergency in Spain many people have become increasingly reliant on



postal deliveries of packages to their homes, but unfortunately one of the

consequences of the pandemic has been a severe decrease in the efficiency of Correos and many parcels have been arriving late or not at all. After the state of emergency was declared on 14 March Correos decided to provide only their “Servicio Postal Universal” service, limiting deliveries to letters and small packages. Deliveries of large items have been suspended for over a month, and this in turn has resulted in a loss of revenue and the inability of the Correos Express division (normally used only for urgent deliveries) to deal with all of the extra work it has suddenly taken over. One can just imagine the number of large packages ‘in limbo’!

Mercadona has recorded losses of nearly 95% in March, it claims are due to the coronavirus crisis. The supermarket giant insists the slump is due to a 25% increase in costs, including for logistics, PPE (personal protective equipment) and ensuring the care and security of its staff. It comes as many regular shoppers at the supermarket insist that prices have not only gone up but that the chain also appears to be doing far better than most other businesses and supermarkets. However, Mercadona claims to have spent millions on installing checkout screens in all of its 1,634 stores, as well as introducing hand sanitiser units and issuing PPE to all of its staff and employed external security guards. In addition, at the beginning of March, the company invested €44 million to give its staff a 20% pay increase to compensate them for their extra effort and risk in continuing to work during the pandemic. It also hired an extra 600 new personnel to combat the panic-buying that characterised the start of the lockdown and to ensure the smooth running of its stores. All these measures were estimated to have cost the company an extra €100 million, almost 25% more than the same period last year. According to the company, a

total of €15 million was spent on disinfection and a further €60 million on adapting the stores. The massive investment has all but cancelled out the 14% increase in sales in March due to consumers purchasing extra items for their home. Industry experts added that although consumer buying during March increased, **many of the items that were targeted were basic, low margin items** such as cleaning products and toilet rolls. This is understandable as millions were not working or being paid.

Farmers in the province are experiencing a **spectacular increase in demand for citrus and all kinds of fruit** and vegetable products during the state of alarm. Oranges and lemons from South Africa and table grapes from Chile are being imported to cope with the demand during the coronavirus crisis. Orange production finished a month earlier here due to a strong increase in demand. As for summer fruit, there is still no great demand. People continue to ask for more citrus than apricots or nectarines. Lettuces, cauliflowers and broccoli are also in high demand. The abundant rains in recent months have also contributed to the recovery of prices, since it has resulted in an increase in the size of some orange varieties, such as ValenciaLate and Navel-Lane-Late, Navel Powel and ValenciaLate. The vegetables most popular are tomato, lettuce, bell pepper, onion, cucumber and eggplant. In these products, 97% correspond to national and local production (Alicante, Murcia, Valencia) representing 74% of the total. Regarding potatoes, 79% are of national origin and 62% are local potatoes.

Germans have been advised to forget possible holidays in Spain this summer. Thomas Bareiss, Germany’s Federal Government Commissioner for Tourism, has warned the country’s population of 83 million that they should begin to accept that this year it will not be possible for them to take holidays abroad, specifically naming the Spanish beaches as one of the favoured destinations which will be out of bounds for them as the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect travel worldwide. Herr Bareiss stated in an interview that a quick resumption of tourist travel to Spain, Greece and Turkey is “more than improbable”, effectively confirming that the Spanish tourism industry will lose at least one of the most important sources of international visitors for the remainder of 2020. Last year 11.18 million people visited Spain from Germany, accounting for around 13.3% of the 83.7 million visitors from abroad during the year. Only the **UK exceeded** the contribution made by Germany (**with 18.1 million visitors**), but many British nationals are also extremely unlikely to be holidaying on the Costas this

Monica’s Meal

Monica had just finished her fish dinner in a restaurant in Punta Prima, but was not at all happy with it, so she called the waiter over. ‘I’ve tasted fresher fish,’ said Monica. ‘Not in here,’ replied the waiter.

The Spanish Property Market.

The first quarter figures for property sales and prices in Spain is now largely irrelevant. Whereas most of the indices for late 2019 and January 2020 were positive, they still indicated a **slight downward trend**. This suggested that the market was cooling down. With the market now frozen and little to expect from quarter 2 - the lockdown period with few flights, it's going to be at least six months more before we can get an idea of where prices are heading.

A recent survey by Spanish Property Insight indicated that most foreign investors/buyers now expected prices, particularly **that of holiday home, to drop** by around 10%. The Spanish banks have forecast a 6% decline in prices and a two-year recovery period.

Again, bear in mind that there is a massive stock of newly built unoccupied homes - now around 800,000 - some up to ten years old!

howtobuyinspain.com came up with a detailed analysis of **the property market in Spain post Covid-19**, whenever that will be! It's worth reading if you are buying or selling. I am repeating just a little of it below but there is a link to the full report at the bottom of this section.

On the demand side

The housing market will not go unscathed, as consumer confidence and a strong labour market are the two essential elements in the decision to purchase a home. Fewer buyers will come to the market than before:

- Spaniards will be less active to buy homes due to the weak economy

As prices have risen steadily for the last six years nearly everywhere in Spain, buyers are afraid to pay top prices, we think this fear will vanish quickly IF the economy recovers

- Some Spaniards will want to buy a new home fitting with their new priorities, which means most of the time either buying "higher quality" housing in the city centres (bigger with outside space) or outside the city centres if they can't afford it (but within acceptable commuting time)

- Wealthy Spaniards will reassess their situation and will look for bigger properties or buy second homes outside the city centres.

- Fewer transactions by foreigners short-term due to the travel ban and midterm due to the slowing economy in their home country: buying a holiday home is not an "essential" economic decision and as such will be postponed

- Some foreigners could decide to relocate to Spain to enjoy a higher quality of life

- Cash-rich investors will take advantage of opportunities (Spaniards and foreigners)

On the supply side

More sellers will come to the market than before:

- Sellers from victims' family of the Coronavirus

- Forced sellers due to the slowing economy induced by the lockdown and the travel ban

- Some Spaniards will sell their existing home for a "better" home: more light, more inside space, more outside space (terrace, garden,...) which means most of the time sell "low quality" housing in the city centres

- Sellers who are waiting due to the lockdown will be

keen to sell as soon as possible

- As seen above, the supply of new homes is more reasonable than in 2008 but remains important

Experts expect 25% fewer transactions in 2020 and see prices

decreasing up to 15% as written by eleconomista.es.

Bankinter's analyst, Juan Moreno, published on the 27th of April an article in which he estimates that the price of housing in Spain will fall by around 6%.

<https://howtobuyinspain.com/en/spanish-housing-market-post-covid-19/>

The Association of Real Estate Developers of the Province of Alicante (PROVIA), report that foreign residential tourism generated 5.8 billion euros in 2019, accounting for tourist rental; plus the 384 million that the administration collects in taxes and fees produced by the process of selling residential homes.

To date, and according to calculations made by the promoters association, it is calculated that some 2,078 million euros could stop entering between March and June due to the blockage of the deed processes relating to housing for foreigners, which must be recovered as soon as possible with the relaxation measures of the State of Alarm. In this same period, it is calculated that the expenditure of foreign residential tourism can represent 1,740 million euros throughout the Valencian Community. That's some serious dosh!

Short Term Rentals

Once again, due to the pandemic, short term holiday rentals have also taken a massive hit. Whereas Airbnb caused a surge in short-term tourist rentals last year, they have now largely been dumped in favour of long-term rentals, particularly in the larger cities.

Many hoteliers, particularly in the Balearics, are lobbying government for permission to convert hotels to residential projects as tourism collapses.



"We want a cozy, secluded 20-acre farm surrounded by hills, trees, and streams, within walking distance of shops, restaurants, schools, theaters, and hot night spots."

My friend is so into recycling she insists on marrying a man who's been married before.

Rita Rudner

Human speech generates droplets that linger in the air for more than 8 minutes!

Ordinary speech can emit small respiratory droplets that linger in the air for at least eight minutes and potentially much longer, according to a study published Wednesday, May 13, that could help explain why infections of the coronavirus so often cluster in nursing homes, households, conferences, cruise ships and other confined spaces with limited air circulation.

The report, from researchers at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and the University of Pennsylvania, was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, a peer-reviewed journal. It is based on an experiment that used laser light to study the number of small respiratory droplets emitted through human speech.

The answer: a lot.

“Highly sensitive laser light scattering observations have revealed that loud speech can emit thousands of oral fluid droplets per second,” the report states.

Previous research has shown large outbreaks of coronavirus infections in a call center in South Korea where workers were in proximity and in a crowded restaurant in China, and such events have led some experts to suspect that the highly contagious virus can spread through small aerosol droplets. That remains the subject of research and debate, and for now, the consensus among infectious disease experts is the virus is typically spread through large respiratory droplets.

This new study did not involve the coronavirus or any other virus, but instead looked at how people generate respiratory droplets when they speak. The experiment did not look at large droplets but instead focused on small droplets that can linger in the air much longer. These droplets still could potentially contain enough virus particles to represent an infectious dose, the authors said.

Louder speech produces more droplets, they note. The paper estimates that one minute of “loud

speaking” generates “at least 1,000 virion-containing droplet nuclei that remain airborne” for more than eight minutes.

“This direct visualization demonstrates how normal speech generates airborne droplets that can remain suspended for tens of minutes or longer and are eminently capable of transmitting disease in confined spaces,” the authors write.

A video showing the laser experiment was circulating early last month through social media even as public health officials were weighing whether to recommend that people wear facial coverings. At the time, the National Institutes of Health cautioned that the research was “very preliminary” and should not be relied upon as a basis for public health measures.

Soon thereafter, however, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended facial coverings in public places where social distancing could not easily be maintained.

“This study is the most accurate measure of the size, number and frequency of droplets that leave the mouth during a normal conversation and shower any listeners within range,” said Benjamin Neuman, a virologist at Texas A&M University-Texarkana who was not involved in the research.

“This study doesn’t directly test whether the virus can be transmitted by talking, but it builds a strong circumstantial case that droplets produced in a normal close conversation would be large enough and frequent enough to create a high risk of spreading SARS-CoV-2 or any other respiratory virus between people who are not wearing face masks,” Neuman said.

“Speech creates droplets that breathing alone does not. That much is clear,” said Andrew Noymer, a University of California at Irvine epidemiologist who also was not part of the new research. “Big mouths of the world, beware. You’re putting the rest of us at risk.”

(From The Washington Post, May 14, 2020)

The Memory Man

An Englishman was touring the USA on holiday and stopped in a remote bar in the mountains of Nevada. He was chatting to the barman when he spotted an old Indian sitting in the corner. He had tribal gear on, long white plaits, wrinkled face. “Who’s he?” asked the man. “That’s the Memory Man.” said the barman. “He knows everything. He can remember any fact. Go and try him out.”

So the man goes over, and thinking he won’t know about English football, asks “Who won the 1980 FA Cup Final?” “West Ham,” replies the Memory Man. “Who did they beat?” “Arsenal,” was the reply.

“And the score?” “1-0,” he said. “Who scored the winning goal?” “Trevor Brooking,” was the old man’s reply.

The tourist was bowled over by this and told everyone back in England about the Memory Man when he returned.

A few years later he went back to the USA on holiday and tried to find the impressive Memory Man.

Eventually he found the bar and sitting in the same seat was the old Indian only this time he was older and more wrinkled. Because he was so impressed, man decided to greet the Indian in his native tongue.

He approached him with the greeting..... “How”.

The Memory Man replied, “Diving header in the six yard box!!

(Pete R.)

DRUGS

With the current lockdown in Spain, it is obviously very difficult for the drug dealers to distribute their goods to the users. Despite the difficulty, there appears to be no let-up in the amount of drugs being smuggled into the country. Commissioner Antonio Martínez Duarte, head of the Central Narcotics Brigade of the National Police, reports that the police have seized six tons of cocaine during a four week period from mid-March to mid-April. Although during



February, the Colombian Army with the Spanish Police destroyed a gigantic laboratory belonging to a

dissident group of the FARC -which controls a large part of the production- in a rural area of Columbia, the drug labs continue to move about and have even increased production.

Although Spain is seen by the drug cartels as the safest route for distribution throughout Europe, the Spanish police have not dropped their guard in relation to drug seizures: the main ones during the four week period of lock down being - 3,700 kilos of cocaine seized in Pontevedra ; 1,500 in Malaga; a sailboat loaded with four tons of hashish in Ibiza and 75 kilos of cocaine from the basement of a merchant in Avilés (Asturias). Although the drug producers find it easy to bring drugs to the beaches and ports of Spain, the difficulties of distribution on the road networks is now more difficult with the lockdown and to bring a consignment across a land border extremely difficult. Despite all this the price of a kilo of cocaine in Europe remains steady at around €30,000. Large amounts can be purchased at source in Columbia for the equivalent of €4,000 a kilo.

The morning after I had my heart bypass, the doctor called and said, 'Soon you'll be able to have sex.' I said, 'I've heard that for years.' (David Letterman)

Don't do drugs!

Two young guys were picked up by the cops for smoking dope and appeared in court before the judge. The judge said, "You seem like nice young men, and I'd like to give you a second chance rather than jail time. I want you to go out this weekend and try to show others the evils of drug use and get them to give up drugs forever. I'll see you back in court Monday."

Monday, the two guys were in court, and the judge said to the 1st one, "How did you do over the weekend?"

"Well, your honour, I persuaded 17 people to give up drugs forever." "17 people? That's wonderful. What did you tell them?" "I used a diagram, your honour. I drew two circles like this... o O ...and told them this (the big circle) is your brain before drugs and this (small circle) is your brain after drugs."

"That's admirable," said the judge. "And you, how did you do?", he asked the second chap.

"Well, your honour, I persuaded 156 people to give up drugs forever." "156 people! That's amazing! How did you manage to do that?!?"

"Well, I used a similar approach. (draws two circles) o O..... I said (pointing to the small circle) "this is your asshole before prison, ..."

When the Inmates Take over the Asylum.

For the second time this year, Iran appears to have fired a missile at the wrong target with deadly consequences, fuelling public disillusionment with the government and undermining faith in its military.

In January, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps shot down a Ukrainian Airlines passenger plane with two missiles, killing the 176 passengers and crew onboard. Iran blamed the shooting on human error. Then on Sunday, May 10, for the second time this year, a missile from an Iranian Navy frigate struck another Iranian naval vessel during a military exercise in the Sea of Oman, killing at least 19 sailors.

There were reports that the ship had sunk, and people familiar with the accident said a rescue mission was underway to find at least 20 other crew members who were still missing.

Four people with knowledge of the accident on that Sunday said that the ship, identified as the missile boat Konarak, was hit by a missile from the Jamaran, a frigate that is considered one of the prides of Iran's fleet.

Fake News in 60's Spain.

A professor at the University of Alicante, Juan Antonio Ríos Carratalá, has launched his new book *De mentiras y franquistas*, a volume in which he reviews what was fake news in the 1960's, during part of Franco's dictatorship in Spain. Most of the characters referred to in the book would only be known to older Spaniards, but two cases of fake news at the time stood out for me.

In the first it was reported that the then mayor of Benidorm, Pedro Zaragoza, travelled by scooter to Franco's residence to seek permission to allow bikinis on the beaches of the city to help promote tourism.

In the second, it was reported that Mao Tse Tung visited Benidorm in 1962 and that he liked paella a lot! Although a ludicrous story, it was still repeated in the national press here. Bit like the Daily Mail!

WORTH KNOWING

If you need to complete a Will now....

The Spanish Civil Code allows you to make your will from home in the event of a pandemic like that of Covid-19. Normally a will is made before a notary. But now this can be somewhat difficult due to the quarantine. Fortunately, the law provides for an exception so that a person can grant an open will without the presence of a notary: Article 701 of the Civil Code provides that "in the event of an epidemic, the will can be granted without the intervention of a notary before three witnesses over the age of 16 ", as reported by the law firm Dpj. If you choose to make a will in this case, it is important that the will be written. If this is not possible, either because the witnesses do not know how to write or because they cannot at that time, the will would be valid, even if it is not written, as long as the witnesses included in the law are present. However, given the technological moment in which we find ourselves, it is advisable that the will of the deceased be clear and we could, for example, record that will by voice or video.

How to obtain and download the draft of the Income Tax document for 2019

Getting the document and completing the declaration is very simple on the Tax Agency website

<https://www.agenciatributaria.es/AEAT.internet/Renta.shtml>

This website is also available in English.

The following website gives you a step-by-step guide to completing the form in Spanish. You can of course translate it online.

https://www.diarioinformacion.com/especiales/declaracion-renta/2018/04/obtener-descargar-borrador-renta-n372_30_42956.html

Remaining National Holidays For 2020

July 25: Santiago Apóstol (Saturday)

August 15: Assumption of the Virgin (Saturday)

October 12: National Holiday of Spain (Monday)

November 2: Monday following All Saints

December 7: Monday following the Day of the Spanish Constitution

December 8: Immaculate Conception (Tuesday)

December 25: Nativity of the Lord (Friday).

British to Get New ID card - in Due Course!

British residents will be able, in time, to apply for a 'biometric residence document' from the Spanish and other EU governments. The European Commission has adopted a decision that ensures governments issue UK nationals living in the EU, who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, with 'simple and uniform' documentation (TIE) that meets high security standards, making it difficult for counterfeiters. This is likely to be an identity card with a facial image and some personal information, valid for possibly five to ten years.

A spokesperson for the British Embassy said **'Anyone who is legally residing in Spain by the end of this year will be covered by the withdrawal agreement. The important thing to remember is that, whether someone has the green certificate or the new TIE once it is introduced, both will be proof of a person's residence and their status as a beneficiary under the Withdrawal Agreement. It's also important to be aware that there will be no deadline by which time UK nationals already in possession of a green certificate must have a TIE, so there is no need to panic.'**

The Embassy also stated that they will provide information on when the TIE will be introduced and the process for applying when it has been provided by the Spanish government. So, no rush!

So, whatever happened to Brexit? At this stage I cannot see the UK adhering to the cut-off of end December 2020.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

All emergencies in Spain: Call 112 (Can speak to you in English)

Ambulance (ambulancia) and health emergencies Call 061 or 112

Fire brigade (cuerpo de bomberos) Call 080 or 112

Local police (policía municipal) Call 092.

Civil Guard (guardia civil) Call 062.

National Spanish police (policía nacional) Call 091

Red Cross 24/7 Helpline 900 100 333

Gender violence: 016 and 900 116 016

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The best way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once.

Joseph Cossman

IDIOTS & ODDITIES OF THE MONTH.

El Salvador's government launched a crackdown on



jailed gang members after 60 people were killed over a weekend. Photos released by the office of the President showed hundreds of inmates stripped to their shorts and jammed together on prison floors as their cells were searched. Some wore face masks, but most had little protection against the possible spread of the coronavirus. There is little doubt that some prisons are hell on earth!

Although the post can be erratic at the moment, imagine bombs being sent routinely through the post! Members of the Explosives Deactivation Unit (TEDAX) of the Alicante Police Station had to intervene after the presence of a dangerous object was detected in one of the shipments at a post office in the city. They found a **package containing a mortar bomb** which was being sent to a chap in Mallorca. Although some of the explosive was cleared from the device, there was still sufficient to do significant damage. The Mallorcan had ordered it as a collector's item, purely decorative, from a chap in Alicante from whom he had already bought other objects.



Nigeria's ageing leader has **appointed a dead man** to a senior government post — and not for the first time. President Buhari, 77, who was once compelled to deny rumours of his own demise and replacement with a clone, approved a candidate whose funeral took place in February. The appointment of the late MP Tobias Chukwuemeka Okwuru to the Federal Character Commission emerged when a letter of confirmation from Mr Buhari was read to the Senate. Applications were quickly reopened after journalists pointed out that Mr Okwuru was not available to take up the position due to his death at the age of 59. If one takes a cursory look at many of the world leaders at the moment, it is hardly reassuring to note that a large proportion of them are complete bell-ends!

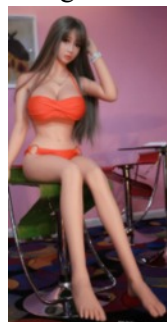
As the tedium of lockdown continues, people are taking unorthodox steps to alleviate their boredom and isolation. In the Derbyshire town of Belper, residents have been joining a **two-minute chorus of mooing**, dubbed the "Belper Moo", every evening.

In Edmonton, Canada, howling at the Moon at 8pm every night has become a popular pastime. Iceland's forestry service, meanwhile, is encouraging people to hug trees to alleviate loneliness. "When you hug, you feel it first in your toes and then up your legs and into your chest, and then up into your head," said forest ranger Þór Þorfinnsson. "There are plenty of trees... it doesn't have to be big and stout, it can be any size." Cuckoo!

A US farmer has launched a fashion business alongside running his smallholding. **Twisted B Minis** offers denim dungarees for cockerels and tutus for goats — winning a loyal following online. Check it out on Facebook!



Sex dolls have become so realistic that, in Germany, discarded models are causing a nuisance to police. Last week, a couple in the Bavarian village of Gebenbach thought they had found a dead body



when they saw a **pair of legs poking out** from a rug in a container under a bridge. They called the police, who discovered that it was, in fact, a lifelike silicone sex doll. Its box was found nearby, complete with the owner's address; he initially claimed ignorance, but eventually confessed to dumping it. As well as now sporting a very red face, he is now being charged with violating waste disposal laws.

On Monday May 4, a highway patrol trooper noticed that a vehicle travelling on the Interstate Highway was driving a little erratically and only doing 32mph in a 70mph highway. The trooper initiated a traffic stop, and when he approached the vehicle he found a small boy on the verge of tears, sitting on the edge of the seat with both feet on the brake pedal. After the trooper helped him put the car in gear and turn off the engine, the boy told him **he was 5 years old** and that he had

left home to drive to California because he wanted to buy a Lamborghini. At this stage he had driven just a few miles from his home. The boy's parents were both at work at the time and an older sibling in his teens was supposed to be babysitting him but probably had his head buried in his phone, when the young lad grabbed the car keys and left for the motorway. The young boy had \$3 dollars in his pocket! Link here: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=C-W-ySng2t8>



A man who was caught speeding at 110mph on the M1 in Leicestershire admitted to police he was on a 240-mile round trip from Nottingham to London, with his two children in the car. His reason for the journey? He wanted to buy bread in the capital, claiming it was **£1 cheaper** there.

The Tattoo!

A man and woman were dating and he asked her to marry him. She told him to prove his love to her she wanted him to get her name, Wendy, tattooed on his penis. When it was erect it said Wendy and when it was limp it said Wy. They got married and went to Jamaica to a nude beach for their honeymoon. Wendy asked her husband to go get them a drink so he went to a bar on the beach and noticed the native barman also had a Wy tattooed on his tigger. The tourist said "Ooh you must have a wife named Wendy." The waiter said "No mine says 'Welcome to Jamaica man have a nice day!!'"

Get on yer bike!

The regional government of Valencia will subsidize the purchase of bicycles and scooters by up to €250 in a bid to promote sustainable individual transport and stimulate small business, which has been hit hard by the coronavirus crisis. The measure, which was announced by premier of Valencia, Ximo Puig, on Thursday, is part of a broader plan to promote sustainable mobility as the coronavirus restrictions are eased.

The €500,000-plan is aimed at helping residents in the region to purchase traditional bicycles, electric bicycles, personal mobility devices (like electric scooters) and electric bicycle conversion kits from participating shops and establishments that are headquartered in Valencia. The subsidies will range from €75 for an electric scooter (which typically costs no more than €450) to €250 for an electric bike (which typically costs no more than €1,400).

This is why social distancing is so important, folks! It's all fun and games until somebody loses an eye 🙄🙄🙄



BREXIT!?!?

So what's happening?

Well really, not a lot! Following the last round of video conferencing between the European and the British teams, the feed back from both sides has been less than encouraging. Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator since July 2016, told reporters in a virtual press conference that the round of talks had been "very disappointing", adding that he was not optimistic about the outcome.

A key flashpoint remains the British insistence that it will not tie itself to common so-called level playing conditions on environmental, social and labour standards.

On the other hand, Britain's chief negotiator, David Frost, stated that there had been "very little progress" in the latest discussions between the two sides, adding that he found it "hard to understand why the EU insists on an ideological approach which makes it more difficult to reach a mutually beneficial agreement".

Barnier accused the UK of trying to pick and choose parts of the EU single market, dismissing the government's claims that it is seeking a typical free-trade agreement. "We are not going to bargain away our European values to the benefit of the British economy," Barnier said. "Economic and trading fair play is not for sale. It is not 'a nice to have', it is 'a must have'."

"Every time we meet they say they would be happy to have a Canada-style agreement, but at the same time ... they ask for far more from us than is available under the Canadian model," Barnier said, citing the UK's desire for "virtually full freedom of movement" for short visits, maintenance of "existing arrangements" on electricity interconnection, as well as "broad and widespread" recognition of professional qualifications to enable British lawyers, accountants and auditors to work in the EU.

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British Banks Cock It Up!

Although banks and credit reference agencies say that wrongly declaring a customer dead is rare, the Money postbag of The Times suggests it happens with ghoulish regularity.

Amongst the cases they reported on were two men whose accounts were frozen and payments blocked after their banks marked them as deceased on their records. John Bridle fell into debt and lost his fish-and-chips business after the error by NatWest, while Anthony Ractliff had his Barclays accounts frozen three times.

Stewart Johnston, a retired civil servant from Bangor in Co Down, got in touch to say he was "killed off" by Nationwide building society in June 2018, and it took four months to reinstate access to his joint account with his wife, Carole, and his seven savings accounts. "I had just arrived in Spain on holiday and found I was unable to draw money from cash machines," he said. "On attempting to check my accounts online, I found they'd all disappeared, except for my credit card account." Once home, he found a condolence letter and another from a debt-recovery firm seeking immediate payment of his credit card balance. Nationwide eventually said there had been an "admin error": he had been confused with someone who had died.

Keith Dellar found he had been declared dead by Bank of Scotland in November 2018 after checking his credit record. "I rang the bank but never got a resolution, so moved money out to another bank last June," he said.

A council worker who wants to remain anonymous said she had seen two cases in the past 18 months of people being incorrectly declared dead by Barclays, resulting in their council tax direct debits being cancelled.

"In one case, a single mother with three teenage children had apparently passed away, so all kinds of welfare concerns were raised. But on calling her phone number, we discovered she was fine," she said.

Richard Catlin of the credit record service Checkmyfile said that clerical errors by banks were typically to blame, although TSB's IT meltdown two years ago had caused similar problems. Here, the board of TSB lacked "common sense" and shifted customers to a new IT platform before it had been fully tested, an independent report into the bank's 2018 meltdown has found.

50 Foods on the Shopping List

Become More Expensive during Quarantine

The shopping list became more expensive in April with millions of Spaniards confined and limited exit permitted to the supermarkets in most cases. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of April reflects a general drop in the cost of living of 0.7%. This is due to the lower cost of energy supplies such as electricity & fuel, although a analysis by products shows that the vast majority of foods recorded increases compared to the month of March 2020 and, above all that of April 2019.

For example, fresh fish rose by 2.7% in April and is 10.5% more expensive today than it was just a year ago. Similarly fruit - its price increased by 1.6% in during April, now becoming one of the most expensive product in the household shopping basket, with a cumulative increase of 12.8% in just one year. Several agrarian employers warned the Government about the lack of seasonal workers and pickers due to the lock-down and travel restrictions.

But the food price increases go far beyond fresh products. In total, 50 of the goods that make up the CPI shopping basket have raised their prices during the state of alarm, compared to seven that have become cheaper. In April, the foods with the greatest price increases were pork up 8%, breakfast cereals up 4.1% and sugar up 8%; fresh fish up 10.5%; pizzas and quiche (+ 3.6%); seafood (+ 3.5%); potatoes (+ 2.6%); pasta (+2,5%) and beer (2.1%). With all the bars in the country closed, booze registered the highest price rise historically. Also On the upside energy supplies for electricity and the price of fuel were cheaper. Fuel was down by 8% during April and today are 17% cheaper than it was a year ago, but the problem being that driving was severely limited to short distances in late March and the whole of April!

In the case of electricity, the cost decreased by 5.8% and the average bill should be 20% lower than in April 2019, depending of course on your normal usage.

What can I use as a disinfectant?

Water and soap or hydroalcoholic solution for hands and hydroalcoholic solution and/or water with bleach for surfaces.

For surfaces (countertops, sinks, door knobs/handles, elevator buttons, railings, gates, etc.) it is advisable to use 20 ml. of bleach diluted in 1 litre of water.

The Princess and the Frog.

Once upon a time in a land far away, a beautiful, independent, self-assured princess happened upon a frog as she sat contemplating ecological issues on the shores of an unpolluted pond in a verdant meadow near her castle. The frog hopped into the princess' lap and said: "Elegant Lady, I was once a handsome prince, until an evil witch cast a spell upon me. One kiss from you, however, and I will turn back into the dapper young prince that I am, and then, my sweet, we can marry and set up housekeeping in your castle with my mother, where you can prepare my meals, clean my clothes, bear my children, and feel forever grateful doing so."

That night, as the princess dined sumptuously on a repast of lightly sautéed frogs legs seasoned in a wine and onion cream sauce she chuckled to herself and thought: "I don't fucking think so."

We Don't Just Need to Connect — We Need to Reconnect **Rekindling dormant ties can bring unexpected benefits to our lives.**

As unemployment climbs to its highest rate in nearly a century, many people are searching for work. Our natural instinct is to go to our strong ties — the people we know well and see regularly. But classic evidence suggests we're more likely to get a job through our weak ties. It's not just because we have more acquaintances than friends and family. It's because our strong ties tend to give us redundant information: They know many of the same things and the same people as we do. Weak ties open up access to new people and new leads.

That knowledge doesn't always help us, though. It's tough to reach out to distant colleagues and seek their help in finding a job. We go to our strong ties because it's comfortable. The good news is that there's another kind of tie that can give us the best of both worlds.

In one study, researchers asked hundreds of people to seek advice on an important work project. Surprisingly, the participants didn't get the most valuable help, solutions and referrals from their current ties. They got it from their dormant ties — people they hadn't talked to in at least three years. Like our weak ties, our dormant ties have fresh perspectives from meeting different people and learning different things. But like with our strong ties, we have some shared history. When we're looking for help, it's easier to ask someone we used to know than someone we hardly know.

The novelty of reconnecting isn't just valuable; it's enjoyable, too. Conversations with our strong ties can get mundane pretty quickly. What did you do today? I made tacos for dinner! When we reconnect with dormant ties, they have more meaningful updates to share.

An extreme example is David Wisnia and Helen Spitzer who fell in love in 1943 while in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Before they were separated, they made a plan to reunite in Warsaw after the war ended, but they never found each other. Last fall, after 72 years, they were finally able to reconnect. Over the next two hours, they reminisced about how they had met and shared how their lives had unfolded. They talked about their children and their work and their grandchildren. He sang the song she had taught him all those years ago, and got the answer to a question that had been on his mind for seven decades: Had Helen saved his life? Not just once, he learned, but five times.

Although moments of reconnection can be powerful, we often miss out on them. The mere thought of reaching out can make us uncomfortable. "I groaned," one participant in the study confided.

"If there are dormant contacts, they are dormant for a reason, right?" But in most cases they aren't dormant for a reason. We get busy, we change jobs, we move. We didn't mean to fall out of touch. In one study, many people felt anxious before reconnecting, but 90 percent reported afterward that it was fun and enjoyable.

Even when we decide we want to reconnect, we're often unsure about how to do it. It helps to put ourselves in the other person's shoes: How would we want them to reach out to us? It becomes clear that we don't have to wait to ping them until we need something.

Reconnecting doesn't have to be transactional. It can be a genuine effort to rekindle a friendship. Instead of just doing my annual "Happy birthday!" post, I'd love to hear about the highlights and low points of your year. Or I was thinking about the people who matter most to me, and I realized how much I missed our interaction. As LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman suggested on my TED podcast, WorkLife, "Remind the person about what you found special about your interactions then, and where that leads you now to be reconnecting."

Reconnecting doesn't have to be an act of taking. It can be an act of giving, a gesture of generosity. I read an article that reminded me of you, and thought you'd get a kick out of it. Or I met someone who shares your interests — let me know if you'd like an introduction. In the middle of a pandemic, the barrier is even lower.

"People think it will be awkward or unwanted if they pick up the phone and call an old friend they haven't spoken to in years," Dan Gilbert, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, said. "But in this time of crisis, reaching out is even easier because there is a very natural opener: Calling to see if you and your family are OK?"

There's evidence that helping others can help us feel less lonely. It allows us to feel that we matter, that we're valued and appreciated. In some of my research, I've found that on days when we've had a positive impact on others at work, we feel more competent and bring more energy home. Even small acts of kindness can be antidotes to isolation.

There's no better time than now to get in touch with the people you used to know. If you're still looking for an opening, here's one more option: I just finished reading an article about the value of reconnecting, and it made me realize how much I missed our friendship.

(Adam Grant, is an organizational psychologist at Wharton, and the author of "Originals.")

There's just something I don't like about him. I can't put my finger on it, but if I did, I'd have to wash it.

Dorothy, *The Golden Girls*

YOUR HEALTH AREA.

Many Residents of Orihuela Costa believe that they belong to the Orihuela health care system. This is incorrect.

The Torrevieja health department has an assisted population of 186,000 residents between Torrevieja, Orihuela Costa (with Torremendo and Entrenaranjos included and dozens of urbanisations on the Oriolan coast), Pilar de la Horadada, Los Montesinos, Formentera del Segura, Benijófar, Rojales, San Miguel de Salinas, San Fulgencio and Guardamar del Segura.

Orihuela covers a registered health population of 168,000 residents with Orihuela city and the districts of Cox, Redován, Dolores, Albaterra, Catral, Benejúzar, Almoradí, Bigastro, Jacarilla, Algorfa, Benferri, Granja de Rocamora, Rafal, Daya Vieja and Daya Nueva.

Activities in Phase 2 Allowed during the De-escalation of the Lock-down Process

Social contact. The number of people who can meet for active and nature tourism activities is increased to 20, and congresses, business meetings and conferences are allowed provided there are no more than 50 attendees, **with two-meter social distancing observed.**

Mobility. Citizens are permitted to move freely within their province, island or territorial unit.

Shopping malls. Shopping malls can reopen, provided capacity is limited to 30% of common areas and 40% in each of the commercial premises located inside. Customers will not be allowed in common areas, apart from to move from one store to another.

Hostelry. Bars and restaurants can reopen their interior dining areas, apart from nightclubs and nighttime bars, provided capacity is limited to 40%. Dining inside can only take place sat at a table, or groups of tables, and preferably via prior appointment. Self-service at a bar is not permitted.

Hotels. The common areas of hotels and tourist accommodation can reopen their common areas, provided capacity is limited to a third.

Places of worship. Capacity will be limited to 50% in all places of worship.

Funeral wakes. These can take place in public or private installations, with a limit of 25 people when in the open air, and 15 people in closed spaces. (Source: Abridged from El Pais)

Second home owners from other regions are still not allowed to visit their coastal or other properties in a different region - but of course they will!

The Mum's Story.

After trying many fruits and vegetables in my kids' lunch, their favourite by far was sliced cucumber. I don't know if it was our source or our fridge, but they only really stayed fresh for a few days. This meant that at least twice a week I was stopping at the corner grocery store to just grab a couple of cucumbers.

After a couple of months, it became obvious that I kept buying them from the same clerk. The way he interacted with me also changed, giving me little smiles and sometimes a wink.

All of a sudden it hit me, and I felt embarrassed by what he was probably thinking. The next time I went in I also grabbed a jar of Vaseline; hopefully I fixed this before he spread any rumours about me being a vegan.

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CLASSIFIED ADS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Different Phases in the De-escalation of Lock-down

The municipalities of Torrevieja and Orihuela are currently in Phase 1 of the de-escalation process. This should change to Phase 2 on Monday, May 25, should the central government approve.

Certain medical areas in our Community such as Valencia, Alicante and Elche are only moving to Phase 1 on May 18. Virus hot-spots such as Madrid and Barcelona remain in Phase 0 for the present.