

RECOVERY IN THE SUN



Edition N° 3

July/August 2007

WHERE TO NEXT?

AS THE producer of Recovery in The Sun, someone asked me a very reasonable and thought-provoking question recently. It was this: "Where do you want to go with this internal, AA newsletter?"

Although the asker lives on the other side of the Atlantic and has not been in meetings on the Costa Blanca for almost 20 years, the question nevertheless, set bells ringing and the mind whirring. Thank God for the Americans!

There are bound to be different views about the newsletter among AA members on the Costa Blanca and some of them I have heard. Almost without exception they have, thankfully, been very positive. In answer to the question, my dastardly and cunning plan was to leave the ball firmly in your court by having you, members of AA on the Costa Blanca, decide down which path you would prefer your quarterly digest to go.

However, I decided I would not be fulfilling my duty as editor if I were not to, at least suggest, a potential route. So.....to the task!

I suspect what is wanted is an eclectic publication that



pulls together local meeting news, anniversaries and updates; AA information on and outside the Costa Blanca; personal views, stories and birthdays; Costa Blanca service positions available; approved AA literature; AA's structure and process; CBIC; news from Area 21, Spanish AA, CER, York and New York; news from outside AA, if relevant; specific themes; and I am afraid, failing your local news and comment being forwarded to me, much of my own opinion! Have I missed anything?

Certainly! Let me know.

Above all, Recovery In The Sun is the Costa Blanca's AA newsletter, and I believe would work best, and for the enjoyment of all, with participation from, not just a few AA members, but many of us.

It is essential therefore, in order not to find ourselves bored to death, that includes me, to hear your news and views and on the back of this newsletter you will see the email address where I invite you to do just that. Welcome aboard!

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Why service we ask?



"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail." Big Book, p.89

SIGNPOSTS OF RECOVERY

THIS ITEM BEGAN with high hopes of demonstrating an idea I have been mulling over about signposts and landmarks of recovery. There exist other 12-step programmes that publish a list of their unique signs to recovery, and enclose them in a newcomer's pack. The more I thought about AA, the more I came up against a number of difficulties.

Firstly, I am well aware of the need to speak exclusively of my own experience. Secondly, I began to feel that in AA, due to such a variety of different rock bottoms, it would be nigh on impossible to follow such a process. And finally, as a last resort, turning to the Big Book, I found more than enough signposts and landmarks, not to have to invent any new ones. They are, of course, called steps (signposts) and promises (landmarks).

Without discrediting or misquoting Jo & Charlie's clarifying and in-depth study and interpretation of the Big Book, much of the following originates from notes taken during their sessions.

Perhaps simply then, the first signpost to recovery is Step 1. Taken from Bill's Story: 'No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master.'(p.8*) Bill had drunk enough bourbon, and was about to accept the fact and surrender.

Doctor Silkworth said of Bill: 'He had but partially recovered from a gastric haemorrhage and seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration. He had lost everything worthwhile in life and was only living, one might say, to drink. He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope.'

This desperation led Bill to signpost two and we read in the chapter titled, There Is a Solution: '...there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet.'(p.25). Bill knew his choices were these: 'One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our [my] intolerable situation as best we [I] could; and the other, to accept spiritual help.'(p.25).

And on page 13, Bill says it all: 'There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. (Signpost 3).

'I ruthlessly faced my sins (Signpost 4) and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. (Signposts 6 & 7).

'My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and



deficiencies. (Signpost 5). We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters to the utmost of my ability. (Signpost 8).

'I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. (Signpost 10). I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure. (Signpost 11).

'My friend **promised** when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems.'(p.13) (Signpost 12, Part 1). 'While I lay in the hospital the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given me. Perhaps I could help some of them.

They in turn might work with others.'(p.14) (Signpost 12, Part 2).

Of course between signposts there lie the promises which are further landmarks in recovery. For what is the point of not drinking if these fail to materialise?

These landmarks come along regularly while following the signposts! Here are just a few of them. On page 75 of Alcoholics Anonymous the 4th & 5th signpost promises/landmarks are found. As all AAs know the 9th signpost promises are on pages 83-84. And signpost 10 landmarks are in the last paragraph on page 84, running on to page 85. 'And we have ceased fighting.....so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.'

A one-line promise is found on page 55. This is signpost 2's promise: 'With this attitude you cannot fail.'

Additionally, the first paragraph on page 63 is a further promise that arrives after signpost 2.

There is often a promise after a prayer, which may seem, to some, a ridiculously obvious thing to say. Page 68, just before the last paragraph, a prayer and promise ring together in the same lines: '...we let Him demonstrate through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.'

Not all the promises are positive: 'If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink.' (p.70).

...IN SUMMING UP

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you — until then.

A Vision For You, BB, page 164

FROM A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

IF, AS HAS BEEN SAID in meetings, the reason for the 12 steps is to bring us closer to a Higher Power of our understanding, certainly the item on the previous page seems to confirm that idea.

Moving away from the divine inspirations of the Big Book, it seems fitting to turn instead to mere human ideas, and I would like to thank all members who contributed and helped me out here.

This member gave an excellent summing up of several characteristics and signs they felt materialize throughout recovery. They wrote that by choosing the AA path – the road to happy destiny, we experience positive thinking, honesty, freedom from self, real purpose, self respect, serenity with real joy and a spiritual awakening. However, choosing our old ways leads to: negative thinking, lies and more lies, pointlessness, regret, guilt and shame, bewilderment,

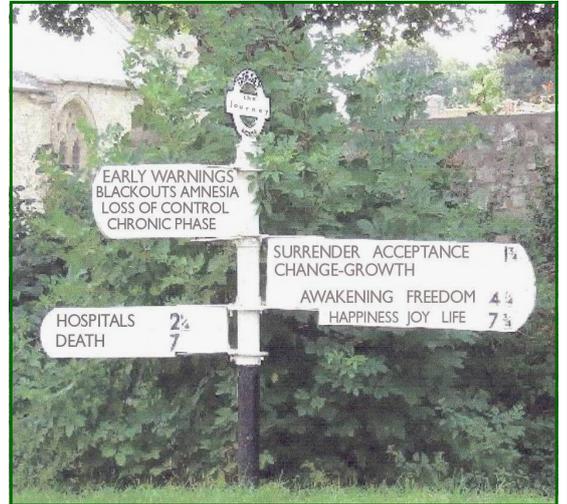
frustration and despair, loneliness, the 4 horsemen and finally, death.

Another member wrote that for them, not necessarily in this order, signs of recovery are: physical health makes comeback, changing attitudes, responsibility, balance, loss of obsession, doors of hell close behind while grace opens up ahead, serene, happy, joyous and free, the miracle is unravelling.

Of course, all the above are to be found within the promises and steps of the Big Book. However, the good news is that the journey is never over and there are always more signposts and landmarks on the highway ahead.

Another member had some interesting signposts: ability to truly love and be loved, compassion, humility,

consistency, self-awareness, honesty and choice. And finally, these were found in *The Little Red Book*: honesty, faith, courage, appreciation and service are all part of the road to contented sobriety!



A MEMBER'S SPIRITUAL SENSE OF DIRECTION

IHAVE never been very good at finding my way, either physically or metaphorically speaking!

My sense of direction is virtually non-existent and I have had the experience of being lost on many occasions, both in the car and on foot, no matter how

many directions I had been given, or how many signposts there were along the way.

It should be no surprise to the reader then, to learn that my spiritual path floundered in the same manner.

As my drinking increased, my "sense of direction" in life became more and more impaired. There were lots of "signs along the way" which I chose to ignore, or simply did not see.

Only when I was truly "lost", totally out of control and heading increasingly quickly down the cul-de-sac of life did I somehow stop and look around me.

There was AA, right where it had always been as I hurtled blindly past - there, where I pray it will always be for other "lost travellers."

I am so grateful I saw and followed the AA signpost. It led me to recovery, freedom and happiness.

I still get hopelessly lost when I'm out and about, but I know that my mental and spiritual "feet" are firmly planted on the right road!

An AA Member, The Costa Blanca

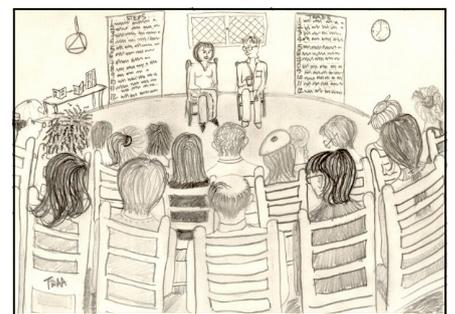
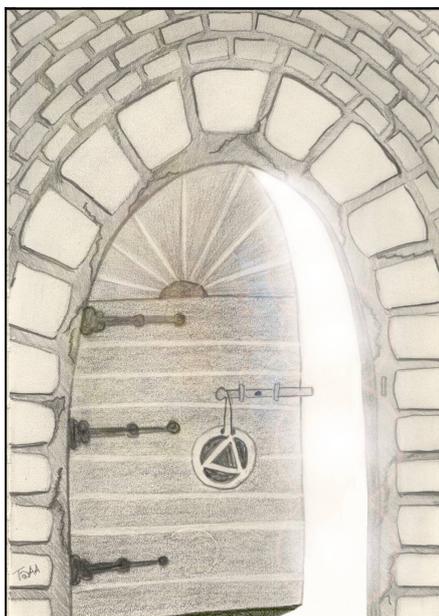
LA MARINA GROWS

AT THE END of April a new meeting started in La Marina, an urbanization very close to the tiny, coastal village of La Marina, near Torrevieja. It was initially held on Wednesday mornings at 11.30am and has recently changed to Thursdays at 7.30pm. On the evening of the 19th July, 14 people were present at the meeting.

Congratulations to all of you at La Marina who are involved with running and attending the meeting and may you have many more full and splendid meetings ahead of you!!

Torrevieja La Marina meeting can be found on Thursdays at 7.30pm in The Social Centre, opposite the Police Station, Urbanización La Marina, La Marina, Alicante.

For further details, or how to get there, please call: Margrethe on 609 664 152 or the CB South helpline: 625 912 078.



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Please send meeting news and changes, comments, views, articles, suggestions, personal stories, or anything else you would like to see published in Recovery In The Sun to:

ourprimarypurpose@gmail.com

Or call:

Mobile: (+34) 679 18 26 22

Tel: (+34) 96 648 1150. Fax: (+34) 96 648 1169

Disclaimer: Articles in this publication represent the views of the authors which are not necessarily shared by other AA members or by the AA fellowship as a whole.



AA is on the Net!
www.aa-europe.org

*If I think —
I won't drink.
If I drink —
I can't think.*



Costa Blanca North AA Helpline: 648 16 90 45

Costa Blanca South AA Helpline: 625 912 078

Keys of the Kingdom

The last fifteen years of my life have been rich and meaningful. I have had my share of problems, heartaches, and disappointments because that is life, but also I have known a great deal of joy and a peace that is the handmaiden of an inner freedom. I have a wealth of friends and, with my AA friends, an unusual quality of fellowship. For, to these people, I am truly related. First, through mutual pain and despair, faith and hope. And as the years go by, working together, sharing our experiences with one another, and also sharing a mutual trust, understanding, and love — without strings, without obligation — we acquire relationships that are unique and priceless.

There is no more aloneness, with that awful ache, so deep in the heart of every alcoholic that nothing, before, could ever reach it. That ache is gone and never need return again.

Now there is a sense of belonging, of being wanted and needed and loved. In return for a bottle and a hangover, we have been given the Keys of the Kingdom.

Alcoholics Anonymous p.276 (4th Ed. Large Print)

ANNIVERSARIES, INTERGROUP & CONVENTIONS

Alicante International, Saturday 6pm.
Started: 27 October 1978.

Altea Step, Wednesday 8pm.
Started: 3 November 2004.

Benidorm International, Thursday 5pm.
Started: 1979.

Benidorm Topic, Friday 2.30pm.
Started: Spring/Summer 2004.

Calpe, Tuesday 7pm.
Started: 27 April 1987

Calpe, Sunday 11am.
Started: April 1993

Denia Big Book Study, Friday 5pm.
Started: September 1996

Teulada, Monday 6.15pm.
Started: September 1992

Torreveja International, Wednesday 7.30 pm.
Started: 6 September 1988.

Torreveja La Marina, Thursday 7.30pm.
Started: 25 April 2007.

Torreveja Scandinavian, Fridays 7.30pm.
Started: 22 December 1995.

Murcia, Cabo de Palos, Friday 7.30pm.
Started: 2001.

Mazarrón Topic, Monday 7.30pm.
Started: 16 February 2004.

Mazarrón, Fuente Alamo, Thursday 7.15pm.
Started: 13 March 2007.

Valencia English, Tuesday 7pm.
Started: 12 September 2006.

Valencia English, Sunday 7pm.
Started: 17 September 2006.

If there are any errors in the above information or if a meeting you attend is not listed, please call one of the telephone numbers at the top of this page or send an email.

The next **Costa Blanca International Committee (CBIC) Meeting**, for all GSRs and any visitors wishing to attend, will be held at the usual venue in Benidorm on 16 September 2007. **PLEASE NOTE:** Meeting starts at 3pm.

On 28-30 September 2007, Spanish X Jornadas de Reflexión in Sobrado Dos Monxes, A Coruña. Call Angel: 679 66 02 63.

On 17 - 21 October 2007, Costa Brava International AA Convention (English), Tossa de Mar, Costa Brava. For information visit: www.aaspain.org.

On 30 November - 3 December 2007, English Costa del Sol Convention, Fuengirola, Malaga. Call Andy: 95 251 6476 or Louise: 610 661 690.

