

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

COSTA BLANCA CONVENTION ISSUE RECOVERY IN THE SUN

FELIZ 24 HORAS DE SOBRIEDAD



September 4-6th 2009

www.aa-costablanca.org

CB BEGINNINGS OCT' 1978

THOUGH Alcoholicos Anónimos Grupo Internacional, was the first AA meeting on the Costa Blanca, our original three members knew they desperately wanted and needed AA here.

Belgian Paco and Justo from Spain, already had several years of sobriety, gained through meetings in Brussels. I had joined our sister fellowship of Al-Anon in 1960 in Midwestern USA. Two years after my husband joined AA, I divorced him and started drinking regularly myself.

As my behaviour got progressively more bizarre I escaped to Spain, leaving country, family, language and culture behind.

Though I recognized that I had become an alcoholic and that AA could help me, I resisted for eleven more years. I just couldn't stop.

Finally, I wrote to the General Service Office in New York, asking for help and advice. There was no AA in Alicante.

They responded immediately with phone numbers of English speaking AA members in Barcelona and Malaga. They also urged me to go to Public Health or to a local church to seek other alcoholics.

When I followed that advice I met Paco and Justo, who had moved to Alicante and were also anxious to organize meetings.

A local priest offered us a meeting place at his church in Albufera. We informed New York and Madrid where and when we met.

Even at the first meeting at the church we were joined by other vacationing AA's from Scotland and Wales. We quickly found that we understood each other in many languages.

I returned to America in 1988 with enough sobriety to start all over again.

Both Paco and Justo died sober as did other oldtimers who regularly attended Alicante's International meeting.

Newcomers who joined the group after 1988 are still sober today. In July 2009, I achieved 32 years of sobriety. I am thrilled to still have friends on the Costa Blanca.

Ruth S (USA), founding member of Alicante's first AA Grupo Internacional



Costa Blanca's AA Convention

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CB North: **648 16 90 45**

CB South: **625 912 078**

Costa Calida East:

679 385 195

Costa Calida South West:

646 290 420

AA CONVENTION COSTA BLANCA SPAIN 2009 - 3-DAY PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 4th SEPTEMBER

12:00 Check in at Hotel & Registration (continues throughout the Convention)
14:00-16:30 - **Torrevieja B** - Come & Go Meeting (CLOSED)
17:00-18:00 - **Torrevieja B** - Welcome Meeting
21:00-22:30 - **Torrevieja B** - OPEN Meeting – Shared Platform
23:30-01:00 - **Torrevieja B** - Candlelit Meeting (OPEN)

SATURDAY 5th SEPTEMBER

07:00-00:00 - **Salon Social** - Marathon Meeting (CLOSED)
10:00-Noon - **Torrevieja B** - Open Meeting
14:00-16:00 - **Torrevieja B** - Share Meeting (CLOSED)
20:00-21:00 - **Torrevieja B** - OPEN Meeting

SUNDAY 6th SEPTEMBER

07:00-09:00 - **Torrevieja B** - Early Bird Meeting (CLOSED)
10:00-Noon - **Torrevieja B** - OPEN Meeting – Shared Platform.
Closing & Farewell



NEEDS MUST SO MEETINGS EMERGE 1978-2009

AA MEETINGS springing up on the Costa Blanca are generally borne out of desperation, need and a certain set of circumstances.

As it has always been, meetings arise from alcoholics seeking recovery with other alcoholics; desperate alcoholics looking for help; arriving in a place with no meetings; learning from the experience of established members and going on to start up new groups; and, a powerful sense of identification when the AA message is heard in an alcoholic's native tongue.

Groups and meetings in all languages have grown slowly but surely on the Costa Blanca for just over 30 years.



The first ever Alcoholics Anonymous meeting on the Costa Blanca was held on 27 October 1978. It started in the church in Albufera on the outskirts of **Alicante City**. It was attended by Paco from Belgium, Justo from Spain and a newcomer called Ruth from the USA (see front page). It became known as the International meeting because of the different nationalities and languages spoken and translated. The international meeting continues to this day

– and is now held in the centre of Alicante, near the harbour, on Saturday at 6pm.

Soon after the Alicante meeting started, the second AA International meeting was reportedly begun at a Camp Site in **Benidorm** in 1979. Held on Thursdays at 5pm, it was started and attended for many years by German Edith, who was 3 years sober. Edith sat alone for over 5 months before alcoholics looking for recovery began to arrive. The meeting also needed a good deal of translation, being attended by all nationalities.

This year Benidorm Thursday at 5pm, still going strong, is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

The next meeting to start up on the Costa Blanca was **Calpe** Tuesday in April 1987. Anne and Jo from the UK started the meeting which moved to its current premises in 1991.

It is held in the well-known storeroom, where they keep the biscuits, behind the Flandes café. Hundreds of AA members and newcomers have attended the meeting over the years and many have stayed to enjoy the après-meeting fellowship on the café's terrace under those balmy Mediterranean nights.

A year later, in September 1988, Tracy from the UK, started the Wednesday (originally Tuesday) night meeting in **Torrevieja** in a tiny, recently-built, multi-denominational church on La Siesta Urbanization, before moving to the town's centre. The meeting still exists and is going strong today.

In 1992, as the suffering and recovering alcoholics on the Costa Blanca grew, a new meeting was started in **Teulada**, in the town hall. The meeting was started by several members: Anne, Roy, Adrian, Jane and Irene – all from the UK. It is still going although it has moved recently from the town hall and is now held at Los Leones Restaurant, between Moraira and Teulada. It is currently one of the largest meetings in the North of the Costa Blanca.

In April 1993, another **Calpe** meeting was started by Carol from the UK in the same venue as the Sunday morning Calpe group. The meeting may have started as a women's meeting though historical details are somewhat sketchy. The meeting continues to this day.

The first Scandinavian language meeting on the Costa Blanca was started in December 1995. Sigard, Reidun, Sven, Richard and Knut held it on Fridays at 7.30pm in the Club Nordico, **Torrevieja** where it continues to this day. Since then two other Scandinavian language meetings have started in Torrevieja – Sunday at 1pm and Tuesday at 7.30pm.

In 1996, Hugh and Piers started what is commonly-known as the mountain-top meeting. It is currently a Big Book Study group that gathers near **Denia**, and is held on Fridays at 5pm.

Since 2000, many new meetings have started on the Costa Blanca, the majority of them English speaking and in Torrevieja. However, throughout the Costa Blanca, German, Flemish and Finnish meetings have started up but there is no news to date about their beginnings.

There are currently 31 non-Spanish speaking AA meetings on the Costa Blanca – including Valencia City all the way to Mazarrón in Murcia province. Additionally, not forgetting our host nation, there are 25 Spanish-speaking meetings in the Alicante province alone.

A snapshot of the wide diversity of language and nationalities to be found in Alcoholics Anonymous on this coast can be seen in the starting of a meeting in **Altea** in Alicante.

It had long been wished by several CB AA members that the coast had a step meeting.

So in the autumn of 2004, the Wednesday night Altea Step Meeting at 8pm in the Social Centre had its beginnings. The following members sat on the first committee which brought the meeting to life: Paul, Tracy, Val & Barry (England), Lise (USA/Norway), Torunn (Norway), Margit (Germany), Sandy (Scotland), Martin (Belgium), Mary (Eire).

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

RECENTLY separated from my husband and with two boys I loved dearly, my pain was eased when I met a new partner, back in the UK, in 2002.

Life became fun again. I partied, I drank and I drugged and my new man shared those pleasures with me.

My drinking always took me mentally to places where I didn't care much about anything or anybody.

Blackouts were a welcome release and, much to my surprise, I soon found that the kids didn't want to know me and my embarrassing actions meant that people stopped inviting me to parties and other social events.

We decided to make a fresh start and moved to Spain in 2004. We bought an apartment and, as we are both hairdressers, were able to find work and thought the good life was ahead of us.

But we continued to share the same habits as before.

Working mornings were hell. I couldn't wait for lunchtime or for a client to offer me a drink so that I could relieve the physical and mental discomfort inside. My partner was doing the same and by the evening we were out of it, being dragged along by our much-loved dogs on their walk.

The vicious cycle was in full swing with the endless need for drink, the nightly fights between us, the broken promises and the lying to

ourselves and everyone else. Everyday I would wake up in hell not knowing how to get out of the black hole of life that I was being dragged into.

So I continued on the same destructive path.

One day, my partner found the telephone number of Alcoholics Anonymous in the local newspaper and called. I thought, that's great, he is the one with the problem. If he gets himself sorted out, I will be fine.

However, I decided I would go along myself to give him some moral support. I was truly amazed by the honesty and openness of the people there and by the warmth of their welcome.

A woman was sharing her story with the group and I found I could relate to what she was saying. I thought, maybe there is a solution here for both of us.

So, I kept going to meetings and put my heart and soul into doing everything that was suggested. It wasn't easy but it was simple, one day at a time.

My partner took a little longer and needed rehab before he could begin to grasp the AA programme – but that is his story to tell.

I was advised not to make any major life decisions for a couple of years, so I just focussed on getting better. I found the perfect sponsor who took me through the programme and I attended three or four meetings a week.



It became important for my recovery to do service in my "home" group. Wherever I can be of help and whenever I am I asked, I am willing. I 'keep it simple' and 'in the here and now'.

Our families happily come and visit us and this summer, my partner and I married here on the Costa Blanca – a decision taken in sobriety by two people who are living 'a life beyond their wildest dreams'.

Many of the guests were friends from the fellowship.

We now own a hairdressing salon in Punta Prima, Torrevieja. Our marriage is another step in our shared journey of discovery.

I know that my life is following a path that is safe and sure provided I stick to what I have learned and with the fellowship of AA.

AA member, The Costa Blanca

N.B. The writer and her partner are one of two AA couples from the Costa Blanca South area who happily and soberly tied the knot this summer.



TORREVIEJA'S ESSENTIAL WHERE-TO-FIND

VISITORS STAYING in the area after the Costa Blanca convention and wishing to attend meetings, look no further.

Below is the local where-to-find for meetings in and around Torrevieja.

If venturing further afield, call the helplines for details (see front page).

Monday - 1930 – 2100

SCANDIA Building, (adjacent to Laurel & Hardy restaurant), Dona Pepe, Ciudad Quesada

Tuesday - 1930 – 2030

Avenida Jaca nº31, San Luis

Tuesday - 1530 – 1630

(Women's Meeting - non restrictive)
Rocajuna Conservatory,
Los Altos, Punta Prima

Wednesday - 13:00 – 14:30

Centro Parroquial Ikomar, (Next to Fiat garage), Avenida Los Villenos, Pilar de la Horadada

Wednesday - 19:30 – 20:45

International Christian Assembly, Calle San Miguel de Salinas nº2, (on junction with Calle Santomera), Torrevieja

Thursday - 18:00 – 19:00

Living Sober Reading & Discussion Group
Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos,
Punta Prima

Thursday - 19:30 – 21:00

Salon "Studio 6", Montebello

Friday - 13:00 – 14:30

International Christian Assembly, Calle San Miguel de Salinas nº2, (on junction with Calle Santomera), Torrevieja

Saturday - 13:00 – 14:30

(Big Book Study), Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos, Punta Prima

Sunday - 11:00 – 12:30

Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos, Punta Prima

Local AA members will be happy to direct members to any of the above meetings and/or find visitors a where-to-find of the entire Costa Blanca coastline.

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
Mobile: (+34) 679 18 26 22. Tel: (+34) 96 648 1150.

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.



Reminder: The CBIC (Costa Blanca International Committee) intergroup meeting is at 2pm on Sunday, 6 September 2009 in Hotel Cabo Cervera, Torrevieja. Half an hour before the meeting, at 1.30pm, there will be a PI Team Meeting. Everybody is welcome.



'...BEAR THOSE TWO THINGS IN MIND...'

THE MAJORITY of us who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous got here by virtue of there being a service structure in the Fellowship. We must have heard of AA somewhere and that could have been through any one of the services provided through intergroups, such as CBIC. For example: telephone helplines; internet websites; public information; prisons & institutions, etc. etc.

Dr Bob said: "Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service". We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind."

CBIC SERVICE POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Treasurer: Manage financial accounts for CBIC. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

Literature Officer: Organise the literature stocks for the meetings on the Costa Blanca. Order new literature from the UK and the US. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

PI Liaison Officer: Carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic by informing professionals & the general public about AA. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

Electronic Communications Officer: Keep AA electronic entries updated. Manage the www.aa-costablanca.org website. Search appropriate webpages that want to carry AA information. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

It is suggested that CBIC officers have previous experience as GSR at intergroup. Anyone interested in the above positions will be supported & sponsored over several months by the rotating-out officer and/or others.

'You gotta give it away to keep it...'



The AA Big Book - page 162

'WHEN, in this eastern city, there are informal meetings such as we have described to you, where you may now see scores of members. There are the same fast friendships, there is the same helpfulness to one another as you find among our western friends. There is a good bit of travel between East and West and we foresee a great increase in this helpful interchange.'

Some day we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination. To some extent this is already true. Some of us are salesmen and go about. Little clusters of twos and threes and fives of us have sprung up in other communities, through contact with our two larger centers. Those of us who travel drop in as often as we can. This practice enables us to lend a hand, at the same time avoiding certain alluring distractions of the road, about which any traveling man can inform you.*

Thus we grow. And so can you, though you be but one man with this book in your hand. We believe and hope it contains all you will need to begin.'

** Written in 1939. In 2001, there are over 100,000 groups. There is AA activity in approximately 150 countries, with an estimated membership of over two million.*

TO DANCE OR NOT TO DANCE?

MUSIC & DANCING is organised on Saturday night for the convention in Torrevieja at 9:30pm in Salon Torrevieja B & C. DJ Alan will be entertaining us with sounds from recent eras.

Booking DJs for the Torrevieja conventions has not been without its headaches. In 2008, the convention chairman anxiously awaited the arrival of the DJ and his equipment only to be advised 30 minutes before the event was due to start that there had been a double booking. At the eleventh hour, a substitute was rushed in to provide us with some excellent entertainment.

This year, DJ Gino who came along at such short notice twelve months ago, accepted the booking - but moved away from Spain without letting us know. The original DJ from last year offered to make up for his mistake - but then found himself tied to a trip back to Blighty. So, please come along and give DJ Alan a warm welcome whether the show goes on or not. That is the question...

SATURDAY NIGHT RAFFLE DRAW IS ON

IF YOU are attending the convention, please participate in the raffle - it is intended as a bit of fun to end the days' more serious events.

In line with GB Guidelines, the

AA SITE CHANGES TO .ORG

THE Costa Blanca AA website has recently changed its address due to administrative problems with its ISP. Visit AA - CB here: www.aa-costablanca.org

raffle will be self-funding and also finance the Saturday evening entertainment. Tickets are on sale during registration and throughout Saturday evening up to the draw.

This will take place during an interval in the music. Prizes will be on display in Torrevieja C from around 9:30pm.



Shy Teddy needs functional home