

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

TORREVIEJA CONVENTION 2011 ISSUE

RECOVERY IN THE SUN

FELIZ 24 HORAS

September 9-11th 2011



www.aa-costablanca.org

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE REACHES OUT...



WHAT DO YOU say in response to that? *'Of course I want to be responsible, very important, but I'm really busy these days — sorry!'* Or do you say: *'Yes, count me in, here's my phone number'*

Too often we are confronted with the first answer.

They say service is giving back. If I live to be 100 I can never give back what was freely given to me that Wednesday morning.

It was 8th October, I sat in a corridor in a psychiatric hospital, having just been told by the nurse that I was wasting her time, the hospital's time and my own.

I was an out-patient and had been told to try controlled drinking. What a joke! 'Count units', she'd said. I think I was allowed 14 a week. I got through more than that in one night!

In tears, I cried: "Surely someone can help me". She walked down the corridor and disappeared into another room. I sat crying, thinking no

one understood and no one cared.

My father had told me not to visit because I was only interested in going to the pub; my husband worked away from home and, in any case, he spent his "home time" in the local; our children didn't want to know me, they avoided me and left me watching TV or playing records, drinking and crying every evening. And I thought I was enjoying myself. I worked part-time — when I managed to get there. My employer was remarkably tolerant.

The nurse, Linda, returned: "There's a man here from AA, he's come to talk to the patients and doesn't mind if you want to sit in." I didn't want to sit in, but I'd asked for help and this was all she was offering. I'd heard of AA, pub jokes, etc, but really knew nothing about it. I followed Linda. There were already about a dozen in-patients there.

This man with glasses shook my hand and said "I'm Peter,

and I'm an alcoholic". I thought "big deal" and sat down. The nurse left us and Peter shared. Looking back, it was like magic, a light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. Peter described exactly how I felt on that morning. Despair. Hopelessness. Lonely, empty and useless. Unloved with nothing in my life worth living for. For the first time I knew that someone understood, but it was alright for him, *HE* was off to Canada next week on business, *HE* had a car parked outside — I had arrived at the hospital by bus.

He said: "If you don't pick up the first drink, you can't get drunk. If you don't take the first, you can't have the second, fifth, tenth. You will go to bed sober, and wake up tomorrow with a clear head knowing where you have been, what you said, who you were with, you won't be hungover, you won't be sick, and you can start a whole new day just not picking up the first drink".

I'd never thought of that. I always thought, if I could stop after 4 or 5, have a laugh in the pub with the others, I'd be okay. But as you can guess that never happened EVER!

Peter and I left that room to stay sober. The others I saw again in that ward, many times. Linda said I could come back next week when someone else from AA would be there.

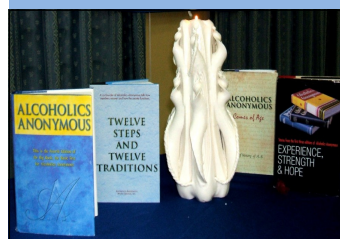
Continued on page 2

Convention Issue Sept 2011

Member's Eye View of Our Preamble	2
Convention 3-Day Programme	3
Our Fellowship—Sin Fronteras	3
Member finds CB AA Thriving	back
Torre Vieja's Where-To-Find	back
You <i>Gotta</i> Have A Laugh!!	back



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 2011 CONVENTION IN TORREVIEJA, ALICANTE



**Hotel Cabo Cervera,
Torrevieja, Alicante, Spain
September 9th-11th 2011
Reservations:
(+34) 96 692 1717**

Continued from page 1

The following Wednesday with seven whole sober days to my name I was back. Two AAs were there, one spoke about the Big Book, the other shared.

After the meeting the one who shared stopped me at the door and asked if I'd been to a meeting in Leeds or Bradford. He gave me some leaflets that I read avidly and pointed out that if I wanted a drink I'd get one, so if I wanted an AA meeting I'd get to one.

That night I was at a meeting in Bradford, and the man with the Big Book was there too. I still see

him in meetings when I visit the UK.

Over the years since that morning I have been in service. I became the hospital sponsor who "came to talk to the patients" and I saw some from that first meeting come in again and again until gradually they disappeared.



'On cold, wet nights, I would wait for people who often didn't show up, but I got to lots of meetings.'

Alcohol is very unforgiving to the alcoholic. My own sponsor encouraged me into service and even though she died when I was 3 years sober, I can still hear her: "If you want to grow in this Fellowship, you

have to do service." So I do.

Since that first day and that first meeting

I have tried to be the hand of AA to anyone wanting help.

Many wet dark nights in Bradford, I waited at the appointed place for someone who earlier in the day wanted to go to a meeting. Often they didn't turn up, *but I got to a lot of meetings!*

That first Wednesday was over 24 years ago, one day at a time. I hope I've grown in this Fellowship, I've certainly had a lot of fun and travelled a good deal, attending meetings as far apart as Shetland in the north and Sydney in the south. God has been good to me, through the rooms of AA.

Oh, and my so very tolerant employer? Well it turned out he was a member of Al-Anon, which explained everything.

AA Member, Costa Blanca

AA'S PREAMBLE – WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

The Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

THE PREAMBLE OF Alcoholics Anonymous is read out at A.A. meetings across the world, in the appropriate language. It reassures the attentive newcomer that there is no ulterior motive in the meeting and reminds all members of the fellowship of their responsibilities, both collective and individually, to themselves and to others.

Rarely can such few words have embraced so completely the purpose of a fellowship to the extent that, if anything is not included within those few paragraphs, then it has no place in the objectives. Whilst behind each statement many more words could be added, the statements are, nonetheless, purposely clear and concise.

I am first told that A.A. simply offers the

support of others who have found a solution to their alcoholism. By implication, therefore, I am advised that A.A. does not dispense medication, provide hospitalisation or professional counselling.

The second statement reminds me that anyone wishing to find that solution is welcome whatever their professional or personal background, race, religion, sex or sexuality.

The third paragraph advises that I will not be asked to pay a membership fee or to hand over my life savings to receive the help that I need to recover from my illness. I will be welcome even with empty purse or pocket. I may make a contribution, determined by my own

conscience and circumstances, to help ensure that the meetings I attend and the fellowship as a whole can pay their way and continue to function without soliciting or accepting funds from non-members or other institutions. Contributions from outside the membership of A.A. are not simply discouraged but actively declined.

The penultimate statement may cause the newcomer some confusion but it merely informs me that an A.A. Group has no opinion on issues such as religious beliefs, political alliances, etc. Its meetings are not the place where such issues are debated or promoted. Of course, as an individual, I am free to maintain or develop my own personal views and beliefs.

Finally, I am told that, as a recovering alcoholic, I have a responsibility to help others who wish to find an answer to their problems, just as that helping hand was extended to me when I first came into A.A. This is only possible if I remain sober.

Written almost three quarters of a century ago, these few words remain as true today as ever. The methodology may have expanded and evolved, in particular to take advantage of ever improving technology, but the objectives and purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous have not altered.

I am a member of A.A. for one reason and for one reason only - I do not wish that terrible obsession for alcohol to return in my life. I attend AA meetings, not because there is nothing else I could be doing, but because nothing is more important today than staying sober.

AA Member, Costa Blanca

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS TORREVIEJA CONVENTION 2011 3-DAY PROGRAMME — COSTA BLANCA, ALICANTE, SPAIN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AA MEETINGS	SUNDAY 11th SEPTEMBER	<div style="text-align: right;">AA Convention with Al-Anon participation</div>   <div style="text-align: center;">All Al-Anon and family members are welcome to attend open meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous</div>
FRIDAY 9th SEPTEMBER	07:00-09:00 Torrevieja B - Early Bird Meeting (Closed) 10:00-Noon Torrevieja B - Closing Speaker Meeting (Open) Noon Torrevieja B - Sobriety Countdown. Convention Ends	
Noon-21:00 Registration desk is open 14:00-18:00 Salon Social - Come & Go Meeting (Closed) 21:00-22:30 Torrevieja B - Welcome Meeting (Open) 23:00-Midnight Torrevieja B - Candlelit Meeting (Closed)	SPANISH LANGUAGE AA MEETINGS	
SATURDAY 10th SEPTEMBER	SATURDAY 10th SEPTEMBER	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AL-ANON MEETINGS
07:00-Midnight Salon Social - Marathon Meeting (Closed) 09:00-20:00 Registration desk is open 10:00-Noon Torrevieja B - Speaker Meeting (Closed) 19:00 Dinner - Evening dinner starts for members dining in the hotel 20:00-21:00 - Torrevieja B - Speaker Meeting (Open) 22:00-01:00 - Torrevieja B - *Disco Dance* including Raffle	09:00-20:00 Registration desk is open 10:30-13:00 Ejecutivo - Workshop on Unity (Closed) 13:00-15:30 Lunch 16:30-19:00 - Ejecutivo - Service Workshop Meeting (Closed) 19:15 - Ejecutivo - Workshop Meetings' Conclusions (Closed) 19:00 Dinner - Evening dinner starts for members dining in the hotel 22:00-01:00 - Torrevieja B - *Disco Dance* including Raffle	SATURDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 09:00-20:00 Registration desk is open 11:00-13:00 Costa Blanca - Meeting 13:00-15:30 Lunch 15:00-17:00 - Costa Blanca - Meeting 19:00 Dinner - Evening dinner starts for members dining in the hotel 22:00-01:00 - Torrevieja B - *Disco Dance* including Raffle

OUR GREAT FELLOWSHIP—SIN FRONTERAS

I LIVE IN Bilbao, northern Spain and have been holidaying in Torrevieja since 1995. My home groups are **Old Town Group in Bilbao** and **Las Salinas Group in Torrevieja**.

Six years ago, newly sober, I arrived in the lovely town of Torrevieja and was fortunate to find an AA group there. Later I learned that foreign language speaking AA groups also meet in the town: English, German, Scandinavian, Finnish, etc.

I am not sure whether the Las Salinas group helped me avoid a relapse, but my budding, yet tenuous 2 months' abstinence was on fairly rocky ground

when I arrived in town. What I do remember is that members of the Las Salinas group welcomed me with a joy I would never have imagined and for that, I am eternally grateful to them.

A few years later, attending Area 21 intergroup in Alicante as an observer, I saw for myself the immensity of AA.

How? I saw there existed a representative for the international groups (Costa Blanca International Committee), the current officer whom we affectionately call *La Guiri*. It was then that I realized there are no boundaries in AA and what caught my

para muchas bromas con apenas dos meses abstemio. Lo que si recuerdo es que en el Grupo Las Salinas fui recibido con una alegría que nunca me podía imaginar, por lo que les estaré eternamente agradecido por el bien que me hicieron.

Unos años después y actuando de observador en una de las asambleas del área 21, pude comprobar la grandiosidad de A.A. y ¿Por qué? Pues por que vi a un representante de los grupos de habla extranjera, al que cariñosamente le llamaban *La Guiri*. Ahí me di cuenta que para A.A. no existen fronteras y lo que más me llamó la atención es que aplicaban la 7ª Tradición como nuestro

attention was that the international groups applying the 7th Tradition as our programme suggests: *'...where AA money and spirituality mix...'*, contribute to maintaining the Alicante Area 21 structure where their groups are located.

Above all, and each day, our relationship and increased collaboration with the non-Spanish speaking groups improves, so that we carry the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. It gives me great satisfaction to belong to this immense and wonderful fellowship.

Finally, a big thank you to the Costa Blanca international AA groups and my best wishes for your September 2011 Convention in Torrevieja.

Lupi, AA Member, Costa Blanca & Bilbao

VIVO EN BILBAO en el norte de España y mis vacaciones las disfruto en Torrevieja desde el año 1.995. Me recupero habitualmente en el **Grupo Casco Viejo** de la misma ciudad y cuando acudo a **Torrevieja** lo hago en el grupo **Las Salinas**.

Hace unos 6 años llegué a la bella ciudad de Torrevieja, recién estrenada mi sobriedad teniendo la gran suerte de contar con un grupo de A.A. en la localidad. Más tarde me enteré que sesionaban más grupos en la ciudad, pero de habla foránea: Ingleses, alemanes, de los países nórdicos, etc.

No sé si al poder disponer de un grupo donde recuperarme evitó una recaída, pero mi incipiente sobriedad no estaba

programa sugiere: *Mezclando lo material con lo espiritual*, por que aportaban al mantenimiento de la estructura del área donde estaban ubicados sus grupos.

Y no solo eso si no que en el transcurso del tiempo esa relación va mejorando en la forma de transmitir el mensaje, con más colaboración entre grupos de habla no española. Esto me hace sentirme realmente satisfecho de pertenecer a una Comunidad realmente grandiosa.

Gracias a los grupos de la Costa Blanca y mis mejores deseos para vuestra Convención de Septiembre en Torrevieja.

Lupi, Miembro de AA, Costa Blanca y Bilbao

MEMBER FINDS COSTA BLANCA AA THRIVING

I FOUND SOBRIETY, following a miserable couple of final years consisting of 24 hours-a-day drinking, in March 2009. And I learnt, very early on, the importance of attending AA meetings regularly. Within a few weeks, I met my first sponsor and began to work the 12 step programme.

Although I did not understand it particularly well, the basics of not picking up the first drink; attending meetings; finding a couple of home groups; and doing service were things I did, and soon I began to accept my alcoholism and that AA was to become part of my life.

My family had owned a home on the Costa Blanca for several years and I decided to visit in May.

The first thing I did before leaving the UK, was to contact AA and find out about meetings in Alicante. I visited the website, called the helpline and was immediately put at ease.

I will never forget my first AA meeting on the Costa Blanca. The meeting had, for me, an extraordinary spirituality and serenity, and I knew I was in the right place. Once again, the

hand of AA friendship was extended and members arranged to meet up with me and take me to the next meeting.

When I returned to London after that visit, I knew I would be able to keep coming back; I felt relieved and safe in the knowledge that AA Costa Blanca would be there for me.

Since that first meeting, I have visited Spain often, and I always attend at least 2 meetings a week while I am in Alicante. Meeting up with others, developing special friendships and feeling part of the fellowship are things I am incredibly grateful for.

The welcome given to newcomers and visitors is always kind and genuine.

Whenever I hear people talking about visiting this region of Spain, I always suggest attending meetings here.

And importantly, I know that when I come to living here permanently, with meetings to go to every day, I will be able to continue my journey in recovery, thanks to the special fellowship of AA on the Costa Blanca.

AA Member, Costa Blanca & London



WHERE-TO-FIND

VISITORS STAYING IN Torrevieja after the convention, please call helplines for more details, (see front page).

Monday - 19.30 – 21.00

SCANDIA Building, (adjacent to The Coopers Arms), Urb. Doña Pepe, Ciudad Quesadas, Rojales

Lunes - 19.00

Grupo Las Salinas (Spanish-speaking), Urb. Residencia Villa Sol, Parroquia El Salvador, Torrevieja

Tuesday - 12.45 – 13.45

(Women's Meeting - non restrictive) Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos, Urb. Las Barcas, (before Punta Prima roundabout on N322), Torrevieja

Tuesday - 19.30 – 20.30

Avenida Jaca nº31, Urb. San Luis,

Torrevieja

Wednesday - 13.00 – 14.30

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

Wednesday - 19.30 – 20.45

Slavic Full Gospel Church, Calle San Miguel de Salinas nº2, (corner of Calle Santomera), Torrevieja

Thursday - 18.00 – 19.00

Step Meeting—Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos, Urb. Las Barcas, (just before Punta Prima roundabout on N332), Torrevieja

Thursday - 19.30 – 21.00

Salon "Studio 6" Hairdresser (near Monty's Bar), Urb. Montebello. Algorfa

Friday - 13.00 – 14.30

Slavic Full Gospel Church, Calle San Miguel de Salinas nº2, (on junction with Calle Santomera), Torrevieja

Viernes - 19.00

Grupo Las Salinas (Spanish-speaking), Urb. Residencia Villa Sol, Parroquia El Salvador, Torrevieja

Saturday - 11.00 – 12.30

Big Book Study, Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos, Urb. Las Barcas, (before Punta Prima roundabout on N332), Torrevieja

Saturday - 18.00 – 19.00

Slavic Full Gospel Church, Calle San Miguel de Salinas nº2, (on junction with Calle Santomera), Torrevieja

Sunday - 11.00 – 12.00

Rocajuna Function Room, Los Altos, Urb. Las Barcas, (before Punta Prima roundabout on N332), Torrevieja

AL-ANON Torrevieja: (+34) 692 799 318

...AND NOT FORGETTING RULE 62...!



"Now *THAT* is what I call a glass..."



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Please send meeting changes & news, comments, views, articles, jokes; suggestions, personal stories, or anything else you want to see in Recovery In The Sun to:

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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.