

RECOVERY IN THE SUN

FELIZ 24 HORAS!

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ALTEA MAKES A COMEBACK!

ALTEA AA STEP group reopens. The Centro Social welcomed English speaking AA members back to restart the Wednesday Step meeting at the new time of 6.30pm.

The meeting is on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and when there is one, the 5th Wednesday each month. No meeting will be held on the 1st Wednesday of the month or on bank holidays and other festive days.

The new meeting is in the same room as before and is a closed, non-smoking meeting, starting at 6.30pm until 8pm, with a break in the middle.

At the initial group conscience attended by nine AA members it was decided the Step meeting will cover one step each month and therefore, the step will run concurrently with the number of the month.

Also it was decided to interchange between using the texts, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Altea Step intends to invite members from other groups to lead the meeting, sharing their experience, strength and hope on the relevant step.

Anyone who would like to share on a step next year please come along and let it be known to the secretary which step you would be happy to talk about and we will contact you.

Everyone is welcome, whether you have done all the steps time and time again or are just starting out and



realising the benefits of working the AA programme.

Bill W on pages 13-14 of Alcoholics Anonymous gives a

brief overview of the "steps" he took before they were even acknowledged as steps! And in the 2nd paragraph of page 14, he concludes: "These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence."

The address is Centre Social de Altea, Calle Marina Baixa 2, Altea, Alicante, Spain. It is opposite the well sign-posted CEAM car park. The meeting room is a few yards from the train station: Garganes, and is a request stop.

For more information call CB North helpline: 648 169 045.

THE BENEFITS OF STEPS IN ALTEA

SINCE THE AA Altea Step group started again, I have been at every meeting – all 3 of them – at the time of going to press. It has been great, meeting new people, as well as being with the familiar regulars.

We non-Spanish speakers are so lucky to be able to make friends with members from other countries when they attend English speaking meetings on the Costa Blanca.

The AA Big Book has been translated into dozens of languages and it is a humbling experience to chat afterwards to a Spaniard who comes along to an English speaking Step meeting.

I am still quite new at this game and only joined AA earlier this year. So, with the help of my sponsor and everyone I meet in the AA rooms, I am working hard

at the Twelve Steps. I am like a little kid, with all the 'experienced grown-ups', who are there to help me along when I start to wobble or need to be pointed in the right direction.

Some of them give me good advice, like: 'one Step at a time', and, '...in the right order', also, '...don't run before you can walk!'

There is also a boost to my alcoholic ego here – because apparently, I am helping them too, to keep walking in a straight line!

At the start, I had so many questions and doubts. I used to wish AA had a universal agony aunt to help allay my early doubts and fears.

However, it didn't take me long to catch on that there is already a purpose-built, one-stop helpdesk available to every one of us. It is

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open 24/7 and what's more, the language in heaven, as I understand it, is universal.

AA Member, Costa Blanca

BENIDORM CONVENTION WORKSHOP

"WHEN WE AGREED that we would go to any lengths to get sober, I didn't imagine that would include throwing a fluffy squirrel round a room full of alcoholics..."

I overheard this comment when we were tidying up after the workshop at the Spanish National Convention in Benidorm, and it made me smile.

It doesn't matter how long I've been mixing with you lot, you always have an amazing ability to make me smile and remind me not to take life too seriously.

And I like to give some of that ability, to see the fun in life, back whenever I can. The workshop on Sponsorship did indeed involve Cyril, the flying Squirrel. It also involved flying chocolate, scrabbling on the floor, writing, chatting and having loads of fun.

Everyone who came to the workshop had the opportunity to ask 'all the questions you want to ask but never do' about sponsorship and every question was answered.

I have heard that trying to organise a bunch of alcoholics is a little like herding cats, but actually, I think we managed to

make sure that we all got a say about sponsorship. When I say 'all', this means the oldtimers, the newcomers, those on holiday and those visiting the Costa Blanca.

We all participated and shared our personal experiences of sponsorship. We looked at what worked well for us, the



mistakes we may have made, both as sponsor and as sponsee, and how we have learned from them.

We also shared these experiences so that others could learn from them too. We spoke a lot about the special relationship that exists between a sponsor and a sponsee and what makes

this relationship work so well for alcoholics. When does a sponsorship relationship end? Why does it end? Which steps and which traditions refer to, or mention sponsorship? Actually, what is sponsorship?

It took us quite a while to come up with a working definition of what sponsorship is in AA. Imagine yourself at a dinner party with someone who has never heard of AA, let alone sponsorship. How would you describe it to them?

They say time flies when you're having fun and the workshop seemed to end in no time at all, even though it was four hours long. Personally, I think it was the chocolate bars flying round the room which helped that along!

So I would like to say a huge thanks to Tracy for organizing the English speaking timetable at the Spanish National Convention and a space to learn more about this wonderful programme of ours.

And I want to thank each and every one of you who attended the workshop.

I learned a great deal from it, based on your experiences. As they say, you have got to give it away to keep it (except of course for the chocolate).

Paul H, Costa Blanca, Spain

12 TIPS FOR STAYING SOBER, HAPPY, JOYOUS & FREE DURING THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVE PERIOD

1. **CALL A NEWCOMER**, arrange to take them to a meeting. Share at meetings, help with clearing up afterwards and visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.
2. Be host to AA friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place to throw a party, take someone to a cafeteria and buy them coffee.
3. Keep your AA telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes — postpone everything else until you have called an AA member.
4. Find out all about the meetings in your area, go to as many as possible. Break out of the rut if you only go to

the same meetings all the time. If you are timid, take someone newer than you are, with you.

5. Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? It is now time to put that talent to good use. No office party is as important as

saving your life.

6. If you have to go to a drinking party and cannot take an AA with you, keep some candy handy.
7. Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.
8. Worship in your own way.
9. Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, beach walks and letters.
10. Don't get worked up about future occasions and temptations. Remember: — **"One Day At A Time"**.
11. Enjoy the true beauty of life and the joy it brings. Maybe you cannot give material gifts to people — but you can give love.
12. *"Having had a....."* No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.





A NUMBER OF changes have taken place for me since I came to my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. My drinking history covered the best part of 20 years. Looking back there is no doubt that much of that was alcoholic drinking. Alcohol was at the core of my being for a good deal of time.

I was very relieved to find there was a solution for me around the tables of AA. At my early meetings, the beginning of chapter 5 from the 'Big Book' was always read out. Not being one for half measures this gave me some hope. Listening to members share who had lost a great deal as a consequence of their drinking, and, yet, were accepting of these experiences

and, who clearly seemed to be getting on with their lives, was quite humbling.

It took me a little time to get some understanding of how badly my wife had been affected by my drinking. We were around 8 years together at the time of my first meeting. Thanks to this fellowship we are still together today. The progression of my alcoholism was very evident during my last two years drinking when I was neither physically or mentally capable of making it to work on a regular basis. It was no surprise when I opted for, and was given, voluntary redundancy.

I was encouraged to get to as many meetings as I could and try to get a balance between home life and AA. I didn't always get the balance right then and sometimes still don't get it right today. No mention then of 90 meetings in 90 days, which came from outside AA.

Getting involved in service early on in my recovery consolidated my membership of our fellowship. Early on, I remember reading a passage from chapter 7 in the 'Big Book' which states: *'Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as*

intensive work with other alcoholics.'

That has stood the test of time for me as I have been privileged to have been involved in service in some capacity or other following my initial involvement with my home group.

When I came to the fellowship I had no purpose or direction in life. Sobriety has enabled me to fulfill some potential that was lying dormant for years. Following a few years study, I enjoyed 20 years in a new career working for a local authority. During that time, I maintained my anonymity in the workplace. This enabled me for one five year period to be involved in alcohol related matters, including policy, practice and training.

Apart from a couple of close AA friends, I did not disclose within AA the work I was involved in. As I have now retired I don't mind sharing it as an example of what AA has done for me. It may give some indication of the gratitude I feel for AA.

I love this Fellowship and any service I am involved in is simply an act of gratitude. It is also my insurance against the possibility of picking up that first drink.

Kevin M, Coventry, UK

BUSY AA TIMES ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

IT WAS A busy end to the summer on the Costa Blanca for Alcoholics Anonymous. Firstly, in September, the 3rd successful Torrevieja Convention was held. This was followed in October by the 9th Spanish National Convention which took place in the tallest hotel (52 floors) in Europe.

Large posters appeared around the Marina Alta (see below). Mayors, town hall councillors and the press were invited to attend the opening ceremony



of the 9th National Convention, themed Our Hope In Action.

During the weekend, an excellent radio interview was broadcast with non-alcoholic president of Alcohólicos Anónimos, Primitivo José Cachero. The interview can still be viewed here: http://www.rtvcalp.com/va-de-bo_c4001.html.

Primitivo is a quietly-spoken, humble man and it is well worth listening to him.

English-speaking meetings were held during the weekend plus the Sponsorship Workshop (see p.2) which was enjoyed and appreciated by all who attended.

The Torrevieja 2010 Convention was also a resounding success. Hotel Cabo Cervera is proving to be an excellent venue for Torrevieja's AA conventions. The hotel held its prices from last year helping the convention committee break even.

The Cabo Cervera is beachside with awesome sea views, plenty of meeting rooms and a sunny terrace for all those café con leches and meetings between meetings. The weather was gorgeous of course, in early September. The committee was delighted to be able to welcome to these shores two serving officers from Continental European Region.

A new come-and-go meeting was built into the itinerary and the traditional marathon meeting was held all weekend.



The final countdown and the blowing out of the serenity candle were celebrated on the last morning.

During the convention weekend, a CBIC intergroup meeting was held which was well attended by a number of different nationalities, including Spaniards, who later held a Spanish speaking AA meeting.

Make a note of 2011's European AA conventions: English speaking **Torrevieja**, Alicante, 9-11 September, visit: www.aa-costablanca.org. **Lanzarote**, Canary Islands, 29-31 January, visit: www.aalanzarote.com. 22nd North Sea Convention, **Ostend**, Belgium, 4-6 February, All Ireland Convention, **Letterkenny**, Co. Donegal, 8-10 April, plus many others, visit: <http://www.aa-europe.net/events.htm>.

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:

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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.



Reminder: The next Costa Blanca International Committee (CBIC) meeting is Sunday, 5 December 2010. The meeting begins at 12 noon in Area 21's offices: Calle Virgen del Puig 3, bajo, Alicante. All AA members are welcome. We meet for coffee & Danish at about 11.15am in nearby café: Cafeteria Alacant. For more information about CBIC and the meetings, please ask your group's GSR.



TROUBLE WITH CHIPS

RECOVERY

CHIPS – and how *not* to do it! In our home group at Quesada, we award sobriety chips to celebrate our different periods of recovery. Great idea, it works well, and hopefully, helps us all to maintain and lengthen our sobriety. OK so far? Good.

The downside is, of course, like one or two other areas of AA is that it takes a bit of organising and the difficult part is getting 'em – the chips that is, not the recoverers!

So in our home group we decided to 'have a go' and order a fair amount so we would not need to keep sweating when we are low on one or two particular ones.

The popular vote was to order from America – it is cheaper, or so 'they' tell you. Off went our big order to the States, from the well-named 'Recovery Emporium', paid for by my credit card.

The amount was well into three sterling figures, plus twenty-odd pounds for delivery – still okso far.

Now comes the tricky bit. When sent they were held in customs in Madrid, and in this terror-ridden

world we live in, all sorts of information needed to be supplied – asap – or they would be sent back!

By fax and email, hook or crook, Higher Power and prayers, that was accomplished. And then finally, just when you think you are out of the woods – a demand for €89.57 arrives – for import tax! This had to be paid into a named bank before release, which was duly paid and the said chips were delivered to our local *correos*.

I nearly acquired a hernia trying to pick up the heavy parcel from our post office counter, but hey – we did it!

The question is – does anyone else *not* know how to do it? There must be a better way to test one's sobriety! All sensible answers gratefully received.

John McG, Quesada Monday, Costa Blanca, Spain

SANSKRIT PROVERB

*Look to this day, for it is life,
the very life of life.*

*In its brief course
lie all the realities and verities of existence,*

*the bliss of growth,
the splendour of action,
the glory of power.*

*For yesterday is but a dream,
and tomorrow is only a vision,
but today, well lived,
makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.*

Look well, therefore, to this day.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

**On the twelfth day of Christmas
my sponsor sent to me:**

**12 AA's recovering
11 defects dallying
10 resentments reeling
9 deacons bleeding
8 roads a-trudging
7 days of meetings
6 Big Book readings
5 sponsees
4 quick amends
3 newcomers
2 cups of tea
and a 24-hour
programme that's free!**

CBIC POSITIONS NEED OFFICERS URGENTLY

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

Chairperson: Convening and conducting CBIC meetings. Approving the agenda and minutes before they are published.

Secretary: Responsible with the Chairperson for preparing the agenda and minutes of meetings and distributing these

documents to groups before meetings so there is ample time to discuss the contents. Dealing with all correspondence and responsible for circulating relevant information to – and liaising with – all intergroup officers and GSRs whilst keeping them informed of any matters relating to CBIC.

These positions have a minimum 2 years sobriety requirement and previous experience as GSR at intergroup. Anyone interested will be fully supported by rotating-out officers and/or others.