

## RECOVERY IN THE SUN

FELIZ 24 HORAS DE SOBRIEDAD

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www.aa-costablanca.com

## PREVENTING RELAPSE

**I**N THE FELLOWSHIP, I eventually came to realize I had a drinking problem and that I am an alcoholic. I came to AA to get help to stop drinking and subsequently live my life without alcohol.

However, no matter the length of my sobriety there will be occasions, perhaps on a hot, blue-skied, sunny day, when the thought of a long, cold gin & tonic or a cooling draught of beer enters my mind – after all, I am an alcoholic!

The danger arises when this **THOUGHT** of having a drink turns into a **FEELING** that I **WANT** a drink and there are various ways of avoiding this scenario:-

1) Firstly, and most importantly, I have to not only admit that I am an alcoholic, but fully **ACCEPT** that I cannot drink like ordinary people. I have an illness which, left to take its own course, will eventually kill me.

2) I try to begin each day with a quiet time (I get up 10 minutes earlier if necessary). If like me, you have found a Higher Power, a prayer, asking for help and protection from the temptation to drink, can give me enormous spiritual strength.

3) Not drinking "**one day at a time**" can be life-changing. The past is gone, and nothing on earth can bring it back or change it. Tomorrow is unknown and yet to come. So I should try to live "**just for today**" and only deal with today's problems.



4) If the *thought* of a drink turns into *wanting* a drink, I **PICK UP THE PHONE!** Sponsors or any other member of the Fellowship, are there to help me. If nobody is home I can ring the AA Helpline – I don't try to deal with the problem alone.

5) When I think of how "nice" it would be to have a drink I would do well to **remember my last "drunk"** – where was I? What happened? How did I feel? Just how bad was that withdrawal?

6) I can, from time to time, feel sorry for myself and go into what is called in AA, a "pity-pot". I need to become aware of myself and my moods and when I start to feel "self-pity" I need to think of everything I have to **be grateful** for, and be thankful for all my blessings, no matter how small.

7) We have all heard at meetings about the acronym: **H.A.L.T.** Halt means **STOP** – stop and think. When I stop drinking I have to learn to start taking good care of myself both physically and emotionally.

a) **HUNGRY** – I don't let hunger become a problem. I eat balanced meals with nourishing food.

b) **ANGRY** – I avoid situations which cause anger, stress or resentment. If I find myself in a situation where anger arises in me, I can walk away or take a short break.

c) **LONELY** – this illness wants to get me on my own. I am more likely to drink when I am lonely and feeling sorry for myself. I ring somebody or go to a meeting.

d) **TIRED** – the longer I am off the booze the better my sleep patterns are. I avoid taking on too much and ensure that I get a good night's sleep.

8) **AVOID THE FIRST DRINK** at all costs. Nothing, but

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CB NORTH: **648 16 90 45**  
CB SOUTH: **625 912 078**

nothing, will improve or change by having a drink. I remember that, for me as an alcoholic, one drink is too many and one hundred are never enough.

9) **DON'T ISOLATE** – I share my problems and don't try to handle the "downs" of life alone. I go to a meeting and talk to others or ring someone.

10) **MEETINGS**, meetings, meetings – I can never go to too many meetings – it's my fix, my medicine, my lifeline. "Keep coming back" isn't an idle catchphrase – it could save my life!!

# AA Costa Blanca News

## SERVICE KEEPS US SOBER

CBIC SERVICE POSITIONS AVAILABLE  
It is suggested that CBIC officers have previous experience as GSR at intergroup

**Literature Officer:** Organise the literature stocks for the meetings on the Costa Blanca. Order new literature from the UK and the US. The outgoing literature officer is willing to sponsor anyone interested into the position. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

**Electronic Communications Officer:** Keep all AA electronic entries up-to-date. Manage and keep updated the [www.aa-costablanca.com](http://www.aa-costablanca.com) website. Search appropriate webpages that may want to carry information about AA and meetings. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

**Treasurer:** Manage financial accounts for CBIC. Anyone interested in this position will be supported and sponsored into the office over several months. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

**PI Liaison Officer:** Carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about AA. The current PI Officer has completed more than the suggested two years in the position and is happy to sponsor anyone interested, into the service. Suggested sobriety: 2 years.

*'The desire to serve improves recovery.'*

## AREA 21 ASEMBLEA

**THE NEXT AREA 21** Asemblea will be held on the 29th March 2009 at 9.30am. The meeting is held in Calle Virgen del Puig, 3 bajo, 03009 Alicante. You will need fairly fluent Spanish to understand what is going on.

Nevertheless, all GSRs from Area 21 are more than welcome at the Assembly where they have individual voting rights (see page 3).

*'Alcoholics Anonymous is more than a set of principles; it is a Fellowship of alcoholics in action.'*

## BENIDORM MONDAY

**AT GROUP CONSCIENCE**, it was decided to change the day of the Benidorm lunchtime Friday meeting to Monday. The meeting is in the same venue and at the same time. Only the day has changed. Benidorm Monday is a topic meeting and speakers are arranged making the meeting stimulating and refreshing.

The meeting day was changed in the hope that visitors to Benidorm and other AA members on the Costa Blanca would support the meeting especially as now, it does not follow directly after the Benidorm Thursday meeting at 5pm.

The meeting would like support from other members on the coast.

## PI TEAM MEETING

**ON SUNDAY**, 1st February at 3pm another successful PI Team Meeting was held in Alicante. Those present gave detailed reports about work that had been carried out since the previous PI Team Meetings on the Costa Blanca, both north and south.

A variety of new ideas were discussed including the kinds of difficulties that arise when handing out AA literature and information to the general public.

It was a productive and positive meeting, even though the lights went out.

The next PI Team meeting will be held on Sunday, 3rd May 2009 at the earlier time of 11am. Everybody is encouraged to attend and bring all information regarding PI carried out by their groups.

*'Service is at the centre of every AA concept and activity'*

## THE TORREVIEJA 'OPEN'

**MEMBERS** in the Torrevieja area have consistently and fearlessly continued to organize a quarterly Open AA Meeting.

The Open meeting has slowly become well-known, well-publicised and therefore, is beginning to attract a variety of interested members of the public, AI-Anons and potential AAs.

This quarter's meeting is on Friday, 6th March 2009 between 1pm and 2.15 at Calle San Miguel de Salinas 2, on the corner of Calle Santomera, Acequion, Torrevieja. Everyone is very welcome.

Several members from CB North are planning to attend the 'Open'.

## CBIC MEETING FOR THE NON-SPANISH SPEAKING GROUPS

**THE NEXT CBIC MEETING**, will be held on the 1st March at noon in the Area 21 offices in Alicante. All GSRs and anyone else who is interested in any aspect of the AA structure and process is welcome to attend.

This quarter there is a great deal on the agenda. Firstly, several CBIC service positions are vacant and nominations are being accepted.

At CBIC, we regularly hear from the Spanish Area 21 Representative who informs us about all Spanish Area 21 activities and what is going on at their bi-monthly Assemblies.

A question this quarter on the agenda is: "How can we improve our communication with other English speaking AA members/groups in Spain?" and there will also be a discussion about travel expenses and distribution lists as it has been noted that often "snail" mail does not arrive at meeting venues.

This is also an opportunity for all groups to pick up their literature orders. We take a good break midway and there is time for a chat and coffee. This is more than just a business meeting, it is also about getting together with our AA friends from the entire Costa Blanca and beyond.

Why dont you join us on 1st March?

# FOUR MONTHS...AND STILL COUNTING.....

**T**HERE'S NO CHIP for four months' sobriety. For three, yes. Six, too. But nothing to mark 120 days on the wagon. Funny how those shiny little discs become so important in the early days of recovery.

Still, chip or no, the days keep mounting and I keep counting. And yes, there are achievements to be recognised. My body no longer stirs me at three in the morning, demanding an alcohol infusion, tossing and turning me for hours on end if I don't comply.

No longer is there an eight-o'clock glass of wine hidden from the kids behind the morning newspaper (a broadsheet is a better screen than a tabloid — and a better read!). No longer the morning loathing, that lack of self-worth and absence of motivation that could only be eased with 750 mls of rosado fully-consumed by 10 am.

Four months on, the body is still trying to adjust. As the liver throws off the years of accumulated toxins the skin still

itches somewhat (quite normal, I understand, according to *Wikipedia*). The insipid spots are now handled readily by *Clean and Clear*. And the liver blotches are fading nicely, thank you. But I am, by no means, home free.

The little voice that once urged me on to the next glass has changed tactics. It now wants to heap me with praise for 120 days of abstinence, reminding me that I wasn't a car-crasher or wife-beater or a fall-down, piss-in-my-pants drunk — just a soul who sometimes had one or two too many. I know better.

And I know because every Monday evening I listen to the resonant stories of people whose experiences are not so different to mine — and their voices are far louder than any in my head.

I know from this group of good souls that our recovery is a fragile one, and only through their example can I retain my tenuous cling to sobriety. Through them, I know there is no 'home free'. Without them, I would likely be lost, back to that

alcohol-fueled world that has never done me much service.

Four months on, I am still attending just one meeting a week, and that is probably not enough. I read the literature sparingly, and that's definitely not enough.

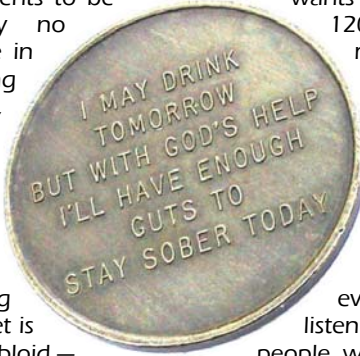
But as one member of our group alluded last week, the Fellowship grows on you. I am beginning to get past the natural defiance to phrases like "...a Power greater than ourselves..." and "...God, as we understand Him". The ego is diminishing, and step-by-step I'm starting to map the program on to my life in a comfortable way.

Another member of our group just celebrated 31 years of sobriety. He got his chip, and rightly so.

Eleven-thousand-three-hundred and fifteen alcohol-free days is a stunning achievement — a bright, shining example deserving serious recognition.

My humble 120 pales in comparison, yet it is a start. So I'll quit my harping and celebrate my four-month birthday quietly, without applause or a sparkling disc, and just keep on counting the days, one at a time.

AA Member Costa Blanca



## HOW WE GOT TO BE WHERE WE ARE



**T**HERE ARE currently more than 2,000,000 members in AAI Well, just where do we, here in Spain living as ex-pats on the Costa Blanca, fit into this vast worldwide fellowship?

Many of us may have read the AA literature (both from the UK and the USA) describing the structure of AA — the Groups, Intergroups, Areas/Regions, and General Service Offices — but felt that none of it seems to match exactly what we have here on the Costa Blanca.

So what is this CBIC we hear about in our business meetings and why did we become part of it? Hopefully the following will help answer some of those questions:

**Q.** What does CBIC stand for?

**A.** Costa Blanca International Committee

**Q.** Why is CBIC an International Committee and not an Intergroup?

**A.** AA Groups on the Costa Blanca are affiliated to our host nation Spanish AA. The Costa Blanca comes under Spanish Area 21, based in Alicante, to which all the local individual Spanish Groups send their Group Service Representative (GSR or RSG in Spanish).

The Spanish call their bi-monthly meetings an Area Assembly rather than an Intergroup but they are in effect the same. Each of our groups are at liberty to send their GSR directly to the Area Assembly where they would, as normal, have individual voting rights.

However, and here's the crunch, naturally the Assemblies are held in Spanish and unless the GSR is fluent in the language they would be unable to participate fully.

**THAT'S WHY** the Costa Blanca International Committee was set up in order to obtain an informed conscience of all the non-Spanish speaking groups that could then be taken to the Area Assembly by just one Representative who needs to be bi-lingual.

**Q.** Why don't we come under CER (Central European Region) which is Region 15 of AA Great Britain as many other English-speaking ex-pat groups in Europe do?

**A.** Costa Blanca International Committee is, just that! **International.**

We are not just English-speaking — we represent meetings held in German, Scandinavian, Finnish, and Flemish. And even where we are "English-Speaking", a number of members actually come from Ireland!

So there was the dilemma!

When AA got itself 'organised' (God forbid) on the Costa Blanca a good few years ago now, it was decided that rather than continuously debate in which country's GSO a representative of all the meetings should participate and where the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition funds should be sent, they agreed, instead, to support the host nation, Spanish AA, who were, and still are, extremely short of funding.

**So now you know why it is, as it is. For now that is!**

AA Member Costa Blanca

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

[ourprimarypurpose@gmail.com](mailto:ourprimarypurpose@gmail.com)

Please email this address if you would like to be included on the Recovery In The Sun mailing list.

Or call - mob: (+34) 679 18 26 22 or 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.*

MEETING  
MAKERS  
MAKE  
IT!

## SPREAD YOUR WINGS AND MAKE TORREVIEJA A DATE

**F**OLLOWING the success of the 20th Anniversary event in 2008, Torrevieja will again host the Costa Blanca English-speaking convention this year.

On the basis that "if it isn't broken, why fix it?" the format will remain largely unchanged. The theme will again be "Recovery in the Sun" with organised "open" and "closed" meetings and invited speakers from groups here on the Costa Blanca as well as those who visit regularly and "top up" their sobriety whilst on holiday. Details for your diaries are:



**AA COSTA BLANCA ENGLISH SPEAKING CONVENTION**  
**CABO CERVERA HOTEL, LA MATA, TORREVIEJA**  
**4-6 SEPTEMBER, 2009**

There will be an all-day "marathon" meeting as these have proven popular elsewhere and we hope most members will want to attend the raffle and disco event on Saturday evening.

Our friends from Al-Anon will participate and we hope they will again include an "open" meeting in their programme so that interested AA members can see what life was like on the other side!

Members of the organising committee are currently the same as in 2008 but we would like to see other committed resident members join us to facilitate change and handover for the future.

The next meeting of the committee is Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March at 18:30 hours, at Calle Santomera 2 (Cnr. of Calle San Miguel de Salinas), Torrevieja.

For more information, contact Ron 96 678 6573 or e-mail [roncharris@gmail.com](mailto:roncharris@gmail.com).

Special accommodation rates have again been agreed with the hotel, prices are as follows:

## The 23½ Psalm



*The Lord is my sponsor! I shall not want.  
He maketh me to go to many meetings.  
He leadeth me to sit back, relax and listen with an open mind.  
He restoreth my soul, my sanity and my health.  
He leadeth me in the paths of sobriety, serenity and fellowship for my own sake.*

*He teacheth me to think, to take it easy, to live and let live and to do first things first.  
He maketh me honest, humble and grateful.  
He teacheth me to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things that I can and giveth me the wisdom to know the difference.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of despair, frustration, guilt and remorse, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me; the Program, Thy way of life, the Twelve Steps, they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: rationalization, fear, anxiety, self-pity and resentment. Thou anointest my confused mind and jangled nerves with knowledge, understanding and hope. No longer am I alone; neither am I afraid, nor sick, nor helpless, nor hopeless. My cup runneth over.*

*Surely sobriety and serenity shall follow me all the days of my life, twenty-four hours at a time, as I surrender my will to Thine and carry the message to others; and I shall dwell in the house of my Higher Power daily. Forever and Ever.*



Cabo Cervera Hotel: beachside venue for Costa Blanca English-speaking AA Convention

Double Room B&B €78,60  
Single Room B&B €59,30  
Double Room Half Board €94,73  
Single Room Half Board €67,36  
Double Room Full Board €107,41  
Single Room Full Board €73,71  
Prices EXCLUSIVE of 7% VAT.

To book a room, please contact the hotel directly, quoting the AA event in all communications.

Flyers will shortly be available for distribution and more information will appear in

subsequent editions of Recovery in the Sun.

If you have any suggestions about what you would like to see happen at the convention, please e-mail [aaevent@gmail.com](mailto:aaevent@gmail.com).



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