

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## RECOVERY IN THE SUN

SOLO POR HOY!

June 2011  
Issue No. 15



[www.aa-costablanca.org](http://www.aa-costablanca.org)

## HAPPY 76<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY AA!

**O**N FRIDAY, 10 June 2011, AA is 76 years old. Celebrations and events to mark this anniversary will be held in and outside of AA meetings throughout the world.

A Spanish-speaking Public Information AA meeting will take place at 6.30pm, Palacio de Congresos de Alicante, Ilustre Colegio Oficial de Médicos de Alicante, Planta 1, Sala 3, 47 Avenida de Denia, Alicante.

All Spanish-speaking meetings in Area 21, during the following week 13-19 June

will be Open AA meetings so that non-alcoholics can attend. Gratitude can be expressed through actions big and small. It serves us best when it is kept alive, in our individual lives and in our group conscience.

"Gratitude should go forward, rather than backward," wrote Bill W. in a 1959 letter. "In other words, if you carry the message to others, you will be making



the best possible repayment for the help given you."

AA is a programme of action and while gratitude can't possibly be confined to a single week, a particular month, or even a given year, a special investment of gratitude will often bring a full return.

"I try to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits," wrote Bill W. in a March 1962 Grapevine article. "When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know."

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679 385 195  
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646 290 420

## XXXII GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE IN ASTURIAS

**THE XXXII NATIONAL** General Service Conference in Avilés in April 2011, was opened by Primitivo Cachero - AA's non-alcoholic, and therefore very public, president, and followed



Herrero talks about AA at Conference

with talks by the Asturian minister of health, Ramón Quirós, and the attorney general of Asturias, Gerardo Herrero. Both speakers made

powerful and moving comments about the work of Alcoholics Anonymous 75 years on.

The conference was a great success with 23 of the 24 Spanish Areas represented by their delegates.

The delegates worked hard throughout the three days of Conference and at times, into the early hours of the morning.

The late Bernard Smith, non-alcoholic chairperson of the board of trustees in 1954 said that General Service Conference is essential to '...ensure that changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all AA, and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that

all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what



President, custodians & delegates tables

his or her social position is.' p.S19 World Service Manual.

The delegates, trustees and custodians went over and over,

discussing in depth, the importance of our Traditions and Concepts and how they are practiced and carried out in all AAs affairs.

It was remarkable to see the knowledge, wisdom and immense understanding born out of years of experience of AAs principles and approved literature, among those who were working. All of it carried out with respect and humour.

Others present could only observe and did not participate in discussions.

For further understanding of Conference and delegate rotation - see Chapter Six of The AA Service Manual.

# THE POT WHERE AA MONEY & SPIRITUALITY MIX



**SELF-SUPPORTING** through our own contributions: It has taken many years for the Fellowship to start to support its services through members' voluntary contributions, and the sale of approved literature. Money flowing through the service structure varies year by year. Gratitude Week in June [in the UK] gives each member who can afford it, an opportunity to give a little extra

in appreciation of their sobriety. When we take on board the full reading of Tradition 7, we understand the essence of supporting ourselves is born out of the experience of the past — financial independence is our ideal.

The groups are the stakeholders in the overall service structure. The flow of AA money through the service structure is essential to further our primary purpose of helping the suffering alcoholic in accordance with the traditions of the Fellowship.

Experience has shown us that every level of AA work is important, and we neglect them at our peril.

All donations offered to the Fellowship by those who are not members are declined.

**Responsibilities of members and groups:** Once a member's money reaches the pot it becomes AA money and should be used exclusively to further our primary purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers in accordance with Tradition 5. All those trusted with the responsibility of handling AA money at every level should remind themselves constantly of this simple principle.

At group level, member's contributions pay for room hire, tea and coffee, AA

literature and subscriptions to AA magazines. After retaining a prudent reserve of one month's running expenses the Group Treasurer sends all surplus funds to their relevant Intergroup to further carry the message of recovery.

**At Intergroup and Region:** Money received at Intergroup is used to pay for the telephone service and all other services provided by Intergroup. After retaining a prudent reserve of three months' running expenses the Treasurer sends all surplus funds through the service structure to Oficina de Servicios Generales (OSG) in Avilés to further our primary purpose.

**The Role of OSG:** With hundreds of groups to service, OSG is the vital administrative centre of our Fellowship, supported by 24 Spanish Areas.

OSG produces and distributes Spanish AA literature and also orders literature and pamphlets from the USA. OSG maintains and updates the

www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org website. It is responsible for Conference and for meetings of the Oficina de Servicios Generales España. (OSG España). OSG liaises with and supports World Services. It is responsible for the safe keeping of Fellowship archives.

Staff also deal with telephone calls from members, the media and outside

*'Happily AA's per capita expenses are very low. For us to fail to meet them would be to evade a responsibility beneficial to us.'* Bill W.

*'Both these principles we understand, that AA wants no charity, that we support our own services.'*

*Bill W. (Language of the Heart page 350)*

organisations.

The trustees of OSG España have established a prudent reserve for the Fellowship which is based on one year's running costs.

*...re-printed from AA-approved pamphlet — "The Pot" - partly amended in reference to OSG España*

## FINANCE & THE AA GROUP

**Remember the Treasurer's job will be made easier if:**

- The group has a bank account
- Two signatures are required of at least three group members for every cheque
- Simple accounts are kept up to date in a Cash Book
- All the necessary information is entered in the Book
- The Pot is also counted by another group member
- The money is banked as soon as possible
- Larger payments are made by cheque
- You remember that you are privileged to serve
- An alternate treasurer can take over during absences
- The group is regularly reminded of its financial responsibility.

## SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT AA FINANCES

**What expenses are not covered by Tradition Seven?** *Expenses do not include the use of AA funds for social purposes such as dances, bus trips and birthday cakes.*

**What is a prudent reserve?** *For a group, it is usually one month's running expenses. For an Intergroup, it is usually three months' running expenses. Holding on to large amounts of money does not help the Fellowship as a whole fulfill its primary purpose.*

**Should we send small sums, or save up until we can send a large amount?** *Little and often is preferable at all levels.*

**How much can an individual donate to AA?** *No more than 3000 euros as a direct contribution in any one year. You can leave 3000 euros as a one-off bequest to the Fellowship in your will.*

**To be self-supporting should our Group be contributing to the service structure and OSG as well as covering its own costs?** *The groups are the foundations of the service structure. Members' contributions at group level allow the Fellowship to fulfill its primary purpose of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic through various liaison positions, public information and telephone services.*

*'In keeping with our Tradition of self-support, AA discourages collections & donations from people outside the Fellowship, e.g. at funerals and memorial services.'*

# WORKING THE BIG BOOK TOGETHER

**I AM AN ALCOHOLIC** in recovery here on the Costa Blanca and I have just been through a 20-week Step Study with a group of fellow alcoholics.

We were a mixed bunch, men and women, with sobriety lengths ranging from less than one year to 20 years.

To help us we used a guide entitled "Steps by the Big Book", downloaded by a member, and which defines itself as "A study guide for those in recovery from the disease of addiction who wish to work the 12 Steps by the Big Book"

As there were 20 sessions for 12 Steps, some of these, for example Step 4, were extended over several weeks.

It was suggested we choose a sponsor or a "step buddy" within the group to work with in preparing for each session. We met every Sunday and sometimes had lunch together, which helped create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Although we had all worked on the Steps before, for most of us this was a new experience. Some of us, including me, were

a bit nervous about what this might entail. But as we progressed we realised the advantages of working this way and the importance of dedicating time and effort in order to get maximum benefit from our "course".

I myself had a sponsor and a sponsee to work with during the week. I would, by myself, read the relevant part of the Big Book and of the book "12 Steps and 12 Traditions" and then answer a series of questions about what each part of the Step meant to me and how I understood its significance and its relevance to my own recovery.

I would then go through my work with my sponsor and later do the same with my sponsee. I think it is important to stress that the personal bits, such as Steps 4, 5 or 8 for example, were done exclusively with my sponsor.

In the group, we discussed in general terms, what we had learned, our new understanding of the Programme and how we were progressing as a result of our efforts.

Maintaining this weekly rhythm, no gaps, no postponing, gave me a new awareness of the essential role of the Steps in my recovery.

I realised the vital importance of doing each Step thoroughly, to the best of my ability, before going straight on to the next one, since otherwise it was impossible to grasp their full significance.

As a newcomer I had jumped giddily from Step 1 to Step 12 without bothering much about the bits in-between. And then I wondered why I got drunk again!

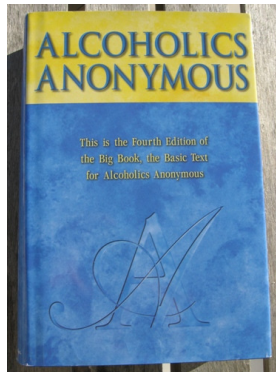
It was a unique experience to feel how I was changing as the sessions went on and also to see these same changes in my companions as we gained a deeper understanding of this wonderful Programme of ours.

We are planning to start a new Step Study Group in September 2011 and I would encourage every alcoholic to think seriously about joining us. The time and place are to be decided according to what is most convenient for the people taking part.

Information about this will be sent out by email, so if you would like to receive details, send your request to the email on the back page and someone will be in touch.

I hope to see you in September!

*AA Member, Costa Blanca, Area 21*



*CB Step Group based on the BB*

## THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION IN AA

**AS I GET SOBER** on the Costa Blanca, I try my best to attend healthy meetings. By that I mean, I want to participate in meetings and groups that practice the AA traditions and concepts in all their affairs.

One of the important principles of AA is rotating service positions. In some groups that doesn't happen, and serving officers, for whatever reasons, refuse to rotate out. This means, therefore, that there are many other members who never get the opportunity to do that service.

If service positions do not rotate then a newcomer may believe that there are members of AA who are "in charge" and hold long term positions. If a newcomer sees a secretary or a treasurer in a position for months and months or years and years - they will not be introduced to the idea of rotating service positions - nor to the idea that perhaps one day they too can serve and pass the message.

An AA member hanging on to a service position may also lead the newcomer to think there is some form of hierarchy and authority in the fellowship. This idea, of course, goes against all AA's beliefs and attitudes.

We are all equal in AA and all have the same opportunity to serve at the different service positions and levels, if we wish.

Tradition One states: *'Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.'* If we don't give all members a chance to serve, that unity is endangered.

Members may also get the impression that they will never get a chance to do

service. In a worst case scenario, that could lead to AA members not showing up to meetings and thereby bringing them closer to that first, fatal drink.

Tradition 12 is *'...ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.'* If a

group is not rotating its service positions effectively, then that group is putting personalities first, which is bad for everyone.

It is essential to give all members who are willing to serve, the chance to do so. Suggested sobriety length requirements for different service positions are important, but when people have acquired the suggested time and are willing to serve, then we have to let them do so!

Another problem with group service can occur when one member takes on all available positions in a meeting. Doing everything; running the meeting single-handedly; becoming wholly responsible for the meeting. This too is bad for everyone in AA and also endangers unity.

For me it was extremely helpful when I got the opportunity to do some service. It gave me an extra responsibility, which actually built the wall between me and my next drink ever higher.

Service is an important means of passing AA's message .... so let's give everyone the chance and possibility to pass it!

*AA Member, Costa Blanca, Area 21*

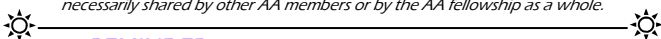


## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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 next Costa Blanca International Committee (CBIC) meeting is Sunday, 4 September 2011. 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, its agenda and the meetings, please ask your group's GSR.



## CBIC OFFICERS NEEDED

**PI Liaison Officer: URGENT!** To carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic by informing professionals and the general public about AA.

**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.

**Editor – Recovery In The Sun** Creating and producing the Costa Blanca newsletter for publication every quarter. If you are interested or want to know more, please make contact via the email/phone above to discuss this service.

*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.*

## MEMBERS BID DEAR FRIEND 'FAREWELL'

'ON A WINDY March-like day in early June, we scattered Graham's ashes in the Mediterranean Sea.

Of our little group some knew Graham, some did not, but everyone loved him – our fellow alcoholic.

We shared his pain, his battles, his joy of breaking the hold of alcohol, the awareness of the love, support and loyalty he found in AA.'

*AA Member, Torrevieja,  
3rd June 2011*



## STEP TWELVE

*Still more wonderful is the feeling that we do not have to be specially distinguished among our fellows in order to be useful and profoundly happy. Not many of us can be leaders of prominence, nor do we wish to be. Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well accepted or solved with God's help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the well-understood fact that in God's sight all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we need no longer be square pegs in round holes but can fit and belong in God's scheme of things — these are the permanent and legitimate satisfactions of right living for which no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions, could possibly be substitutes. True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God.*

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pp. 124-125*

## ASSEMBLY & PI NEWS

**THE NEXT** Area 21 Asamblea intergroup meeting will be at 9.30am on Sunday, 31 July 2011, in the Alicante offices. All Area 21 GSRs are entitled to vote at this assembly.

To celebrate AA's anniversary on Friday 10th June, there will be an Open/PI meeting at 6.30pm in the Palacio de Congresos de Alicante, Ilustre Colegio Oficial de Médicos de Alicante, Avenida de Denia, No. 47, Planta 1, Sala 3.

All are welcome to attend.

## WATCH THIS SPACE....!

**AA'S AREA 21**, covering the Alicante province plans to hold an international convention in May 2012. The convention will be at the Hotel Kaktus Albir, a hotel that is no stranger to AA events. The nearest airport is El Altet, Alicante.

It is hoped that this will be a multi-lingual and multi-national convention reflecting the international nature of Alicante, the Costa Blanca and surrounding areas.

Watch this space.....!



## TORREVIEJA CONVENTION

**THIS YEAR'S** Torrevieja Convention from 9-11 September 2011 is at the Hotel Cabo Cervera, Torrevieja. The nearest airport is El Altet, Alicante.

Book your room now and don't miss a great AA weekend in the sun. Tel: (00 34) 96 692 1717 or email: aaevent@gmail.com

