

RECOVERY IN THE SUN



Edition N° 2

April/May 2007



COSTA BLANCA PUBLICATION DOES ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PROUD

INLAND TRADER, a fortnightly newspaper, published in Ontinyent, Valencia has consistently supported Alcoholics Anonymous by publishing meeting details, phone numbers and, during the last two and a half months, a series of articles.

Editor, Lorraine Harris has unhesitatingly accepted AA information and personal stories for publication. Ms Harris, since 16 February 2007, has eagerly published a series of AA features saying she wants to: '...keep people thinking about alcoholism.'

The only break in the 5-issue run was on 30 March when it was decided to publish an article about Al-Anon.

Many thanks to Lou Harris and her team at Inland Trader from all of us at AA.



The 16 February issue (pictured above) was a piece taken directly from the AA-approved Newcomer's Pack: A Newcomer Asks... juxtaposed with a very moving, AA member's personal story.

The following fortnight, journalist Robert J Lewis wrote an excellent article about alcohol from a medical viewpoint and alongside was run another

AA member's tale.

On 16 March 2007, the focus centred on the AA member's experience, strength and hope. Within the story, the Big Book was referred to and therefore, Lou ran a short piece about the history, publication and the "best-seller" status of AA's basic text.

It was decided, at this point, to take a breather from AA and on 30 March an Al-



Anon piece of approved literature was published along with a Costa Blanca Al-Anon member's story.

The fourth Alcoholics Anonymous article was published on 13 April and beside the AA personal experience was a short article (see left) about the forthcoming anniversary meeting in Calpe.

Other publications published a press release about Calpe's celebration, including Costa Blanca News, Euro Weekly News and Round Town News.

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New AA CB North Helpline:

648 16 90 45



20 YEARS OF AA IN CALPE

In a room behind Café Flanders, where they store the biscuits, at 11am on Sunday 29 April sees the 20th Anniversary Meeting of English-speaking AA in Calpe.

Regular Calpe meetings of AA, held every Tuesday and Sunday throughout the year, have been the life-savers, literally, for countless suffering alcoholics and their families.

This special Celebration Meeting is to have guest speakers from the UK and Spain, who will share with those gathered, their strength, hope and experience, of recovery from a disease which kills you if you're lucky, leaves you a vegetable if you're not, and either way wrecks your life.

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Beagles Anonymous:



"...Would you please join me in the Serenity Prayer using the word Dog as you do or do not understand it..."

12 REASONS TO BECOME AN AA TELEPHONE RESPONDER

1. Another reason to attend AA meetings for as long as I am physically able to do so.
2. To continue to have a feeling of belonging to AA as a whole.
3. I am a small cog in a wheel of service – lots of members doing service.
4. It gives a sense of immediate reward.
5. You can become a telephone responder with almost no previous AA service history.



6. You don't have to be a driver, car owner, man of letters, accountant, brilliant committee member, gifted after-dinner speaker or evangelist.
7. You get to talk to AA members on the helpline who want to find a meeting in your area and also to local members on the Twelfth Step list.
8. Pleasure at seeing members coming to meetings who you helped into the rooms and watch them getting better alongside you.
9. This branch of service helps to develop a sense of teamwork. You, as an individual, are not the only one able to do the job. This is not always obvious in other posts, yet all AA service is part of the whole and no one in service in AA should feel that it's all down to them.
10. Telephone service is not elitist, ageist or sexist, but welcomes and encourages diversity. Just as we

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our *twelfth suggestion*. Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill.

The Big Book, page 89

welcome all races, religions, ages, social classes at all our meetings, so all types ring AA for help and find all types answering the telephone.

11. I no longer try too hard to control the outcome of a call to the helpline. On many occasions I have tried to match a new contact to their ideal Twelfth Stepper, in my opinion, just to have my plan foiled and a far better one eventually do the Twelfth Step.

12. The helpline saved my life.

By Café Mike - Kent, UK

CB NORTH HAS OWN DEDICATED HELPLINE

From 23 April, Costa Blanca North operated a dedicated AA helpline. Three mobile telephones were purchased, all coordinated from one SIM. The new AA helpline number is: **648 16 90 45**

For those who would like to know more about this worthwhile and rewarding service and put their names forward for shifts, call: 96 649 5345 or 657 395 626. Colin M. is organizing and administrating the new CB North telephone answering service.

Following a unanimous vote on 4 March 2007, it was agreed that CB North and CB South helplines be funded by intergroup (CBIC). It was understood that the Torre Vieja meetings will, for the time being, continue to pay their expenditure for the CB South helpline prior to sending their funds to CBIC.

The CB North dedicated AA helpline has been a long time coming and this is an exciting step forward. Thanks must, of course, go out to all those AA members on the Costa Blanca who for so long have allowed their personal telephone numbers to be regularly published and used. Thank you all.

LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY IN CALPE

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This meeting is 'Open' to allow family and friends of AA members to attend and join in our thanks to this entirely voluntary programme of recovery. A 12-step programme, proven by worldwide success; responsible for the recovery from alcoholism. We will follow the meeting with food and refreshments, and inevitably a large cake.

You may wonder who you will see at a meeting of AA. The answer is twofold. Firstly, anyone or everyone, whose life has become unmanageable and has a desire to stop drinking. Secondly, I couldn't tell you exactly. We are anonymous; deliberately and carefully



April 1987: 1st English-speaking AA meeting held in Calpe

so, and therefore any member of the community can come, share their story and have no fear whatsoever of their identity leaking out. This is important to us and is one of the foundations of our Fellowship.

We are anonymous, but not invisible, and if you think you may have a problem with alcohol get to a meeting, any meeting, anywhere between Valencia City and Murcia. Seven days a week, 365 days a year. Inside you will find safety, warmth and belief in recovery.

By Jon C. Calpe, Alicante

Without unity the heart of AA would cease to beat;
As Bill Sees It p.125

THANK YOU FOR TRANSLATING!

MY NAME IS JULIANNE, I AM AN ALCOHOLIC and AA's Area 21 (Alicante Province) Liaison Officer for the Costa Blanca International Committee (CBIC) groups. I am in my second year of service and very grateful for the opportunity to serve at Area level.

Every two months, I attend Area 21 Intergroup held in Alicante. All GSRs and visitors are welcome. The Intergroup meetings usually last 2 hours and GSRs for the Alicante Province Spanish-speaking groups give their reports and vote on arising issues.

Recently we had elections for a new Area 21 Delegate as Asun's 2-year term of office was coming to an end. Paco was elected. Recently along with other GSRs, he attended the Annual General Service meeting in Asturias. At the AGS, Paco gave a report about Area 21 including all groups affiliated with CBIC and, of course, the Spanish-speaking groups.

The Spanish-speaking AA groups range from a few members to many and have the same growing pains as many of the International groups, with difficulty filling service positions being at the top of the list.



*«Alcohólicos Anónimos»,
es una Comunidad de hombres y mujeres
que comparten su mutua experiencia,
fortaleza y esperanza para resolver
su problema común y ayudar a otros
a recuperarse del alcoholismo.
El único requisito para ser miembro de A.A.
es el deseo de dejar la bebida.
Para ser miembro de A.A. no se pagan
honorarios ni cuotas; nos mantenemos
con nuestras propias contribuciones.
A.A. no está afiliada a ninguna secta,
religión, partido político, organización
o institución alguna; no desea intervenir
en controversias, no respalda
ni se opone a ninguna causa.
Nuestro objetivo primordial
es mantenernos sobrios y ayudar
a otros alcohólicos a alcanzar
el estado de sobriedad».*

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Every three months, I attend the Costa Blanca International Committee (CBIC) meeting where I give a report to the International groups. My report includes information about what is going on at Area 21 level and, when appropriate, at national level.

In February, Area 21 sponsored and participated in a Service Workshop held in Albir, Alicante. Members from eight other Spanish Areas were present. Although few English-speakers attended, we discussed two critical issues. One was the Costa Blanca North AA helpline telephone service that has just gone live. The other was how to sponsor members into service.

We came to some useful conclusions about promoting service:

- We need to introduce the newcomer to service when they arrive, little by little. Sometimes we think that they are only capable of digesting the 12 steps and we forget about the 12 Traditions.
- In the International groups many members are here temporarily or for a short visit and this keeps them from taking on service positions. To involve and encourage the visitor, we should make service position term's shorter. Instead of one year, three months or six months would be more practical. Also, turnover is important and one person should not stay in a service position more than the full recommended term.
- At the end of every meeting, we need to thank the people who have done service that day. Plus all group committee members must be thanked at every meeting.

- We also need to announce available service positions at every meeting so that people have the opportunity to put themselves forward. If we don't know it exists – we can't volunteer for it!
- We should have structure in the group, we can study and talk about the 12 Traditions, and by doing this we will perhaps motivate more people into service.

I have been in service since I came into AA in 1990 and am grateful for the quality of sobriety doing service has given me. Thank you for letting me share.

Julianne, Calpe, Alicante, Area 21

THE A.A. GROUP

...taken from approved AA pamphlet

Why do Groups have 'Officers'? All sorts of jobs have to be done to keep an AA group going – or to start one. And most of us agree, "AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." (Tradition 9).

It takes people to get these jobs done, of course. In AA groups they are called "officers" or "committee members", but our Second Tradition reminds us that: "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

They are usually chosen by the group for limited terms of service.

It is through the work of group members in AA that: alcoholics in the community learn that AA is available and how to find it; calls for help are answered; a meeting place is provided, made ready, and cleaned up after meetings; programmes are arranged for meetings; literature is on hand, and refreshments are served; the necessary money is collected and properly spent; group problems get solved; necessary contact is made with the rest of AA – locally through intergroup and nationally through General Service Offices in Spain, UK, USA or Central Europe.



Titles in AA do not bring authority or honour

The jobs they do may have titles. But titles in AA do not bring authority or honour; they describe services and responsibilities.

They are ways of "carrying the message". They are forms of 12th Step work an AA member does,

primarily to help *herself* for *himself* recover.

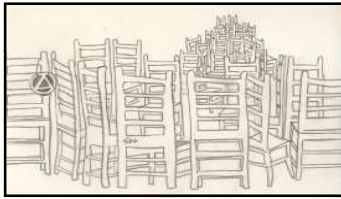
It is said that learning to accept responsibility in the group is a privilege. Handled properly, it can be helpful in recovery.

Many AA members have found group duties an excellent way to strengthen their own sobriety.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Send news, articles, ideas and personal stories for the next Recovery In The Sun issue to:
ourprimarypurpose@gmail.com

Mobile: (+34) 679 18 26 22
Fax: (+34) 96 648 1169



AA is on the Net!
www.aa-europe.org

RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible



AA's 9th Step Promises

IF WE ARE PAINSTAKING about this phase of our development we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us — sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. 83-84

ALCOHOLISM IS A ROUGH WORD TO DEAL WITH

While there is no formal "AA definition" of alcoholism, most of us agree that, for us, it could be described as a **physical compulsion, coupled with a mental obsession**. We mean that we had a distinct physical desire to consume alcohol beyond our capacity to control it, and in defiance of all rules of common sense. We not only had an abnormal craving for alcohol but we frequently yielded to it at the worst possible moments.

As alcoholics, we have learned the hard way that will power alone, however strong in other respects, was not enough to keep us sober. We have tried going on the wagon for specified periods; made solemn promises; switched brands and beverages; tried drinking only during certain hours. But none of our plans worked. We always wound up, sooner or later, getting drunk when we not only wanted to stay sober but had every rational incentive for staying sober.

Nobody is too young, or too old to have trouble with booze.



That is because alcoholism is an illness. It can hit anyone. Young, old, rich, poor, black, white.

And it doesn't matter how long you've been drinking or what you've been drinking. It's what drinking **does to you** that counts.

To help you decide whether you might have a problem with your drinking, here are 12 questions. The answers are nobody's business but your own.

If you can answer yes to any *one* of these questions, maybe it is time you took a serious look at what your drinking might be doing to you.

1. Do you drink because you have problems? To face stressful situations?
2. Do you drink when you get mad at others: friends, parents or partners?
3. Do you often prefer to drink alone, rather than with others?
4. If you are a student are you starting



to get low marks? If at work, are you skiving off?

5. Do you ever try to stop or drink less – and fail?
6. Have you begun to drink in the morning, before going to school or work?
7. Do you gulp your drinks as if to satisfy a great thirst?
8. Do you ever have loss of memory due to your drinking?
9. Do you avoid being honest with others about your drinking?
10. Do you ever get into trouble when you are drinking?
11. Do you often get drunk when you drink, even when you do not mean to?
12. Does drink make you feel courageous, accomplished or invincible?

• If you need help or if you would just like to talk to someone about your drinking, call CB North: 648 16 90 45; CB South: 625 912 078. All calls are treated in the strictest confidence. AA is on the web: www.aa-europe.org German-speaking: 649 206 397. Flemish-speaking: 654 801 049. Scandinavian-speaking: 659 779 222, and Spanish-speaking: 96 521 9471 — all on the Costa Blanca.