

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 18 1st of August 2008

Bienvenido and Welcome to the August edition of The Dream Scene.

To quote Samuel Coleridge - 'Summer has set in with its usual severity,' and although August is only just starting, the last few weeks have been glorious or insufferable, depending on your point of view.

The new president and committee have been very busy and it is good to see that the new urbanisation handbook/manual in both English and Spanish has been distributed to all properties, or to the appropriate mail boxes. When one considers that the task involved in compiling, collating, and distributing almost 10,000 sheets of informative paper (at no financial cost to the urbanisation), it is a credit to them all. I know that some people from a number of other urbanisations have already seen it and are now anxious to see something similar in their own communities. (Maybe it should have been copyrighted!)

All the rough, barren ground around the urbanisation has now been cleared on the instructions of the local town hall. Although one would not expect any tree planting to take place in August, I understand that approx. 200 trees and shrubs are scheduled to be planted in due course. However, as a watering system will not be installed, this type of flora will undoubtedly be of the kind that does not require regular watering but will be of the indigenous variety which will get what it needs either from the atmosphere or the non-summer rains. There again maybe we will be getting 200 cacti!

In recent months a number of readers have said that they have found elements in some of the previous issues depressing, particularly in relation to the Spanish economy and the housing market. Well, I can't make reality go away (the drugs are not working!), but as this is August - the main holiday month, I have included plenty of humour (well, my sort anyway) and I have endeavoured to keep the main bad news to the lower half of page 7 - so you have been warned! But, rest assured, there will be more doom & gloom in the next issue.

I hope you enjoy this issue which also contains a couple of guest reviews, another excellent original cartoon from Angela and enough jokes to 'offend' at least five different nationalities!

Next month I will be printing a survey on urbanisation/community fees. For some weeks I have been gathering details of community fees payable in other urbanisations, which I believe you will find interesting.

I also plan to start, in the next issue, a new and personal review of the history of Spain, from pre-history up to current times. I hope you will find it as informative and interesting as I have found while researching it.

Have a great month wherever you are! Mick, Editor.

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"Apparently he told her 'No inflatable's in the pool!'"

WHAT'S UP?

It is fair to say that Spain is enjoying a renaissance in sporting glory this year. UEFA Cup victory in the football, Carlos Sastre won the Tour de France and now Rafa Nadal is beating all-comers and looks likely to be the world's number 1 shortly. Never a people to fly their national flag much, they now have a renewed pride in it. If only Alonso could measure-up! The new Grand Prix starts in Valencia on August 22nd.

Both Spanair and Ryanair have introduced major cuts to their routes and services in Spain. Only Madrid and Barcelona will remain out of the seven Spanair bases and staff cuts of 30% were also announced. Ryanair plan a 14% cutback on flights. Also, five as yet unspecified destinations will be suspended by Ryanair between November 4 and December 19. The high cost of aviation fuel and a drop in passengers are quoted as the main causes of the cut-backs. Ryanair could post a significant loss this year - around 60 million euro - if the current adverse trading conditions continue. Madrid has also fined some airlines for charging for baggage handling. Both British Airways and Iberia are merging. Their new HQ may not be in either the UK or Spain. Ireland and Luxemburg are among the favourites because of possible tax breaks.

A 35 year old man from Alcalá de Guadaíra in Sevilla, who told the court that he had grown a 1000 square metre plantation of cannabis to give shade to his cockerels, has been sentenced to seven and a half years in prison. The written sentence from the court dismissed the man's claim and says that shade for 80 roosters would have been obtained from 'any other shrub'.

The Madrid Archdiocese has been fined 1.5 million € for causing interference to a pornographic television channel. The Madrid court found Canal TMT, owned by the archdiocese guilty of 'constantly interrupting the channel by broadcasting on the same frequency' and fined the bishops channel the 1.5 million. The bishops licence to use the frequency ran out in May 2006.

ADSL broadband internet operators in Spain are to be forced to guarantee delivery speeds which are at least 80% of the velocity sold, and now suppliers will have to inform customers of the real speeds delivered. Current 20meg connections with Orange, Jazztel and Ya.com are delivering less than 50% of what was promised and paid for!

More than 200 have been imprisoned since December because of the new driving laws. The incarcerations have been mainly for driving without a license, drunken driving and speeding.

The newspaper, El País, notes one negative effect of the points driving licence system. The reduced number of car crashes has meant that there are now fewer organs available for transplant!

In a horrific case, a court in Tarragona heard how a 19 year old man killed his 11 month old stepson because the child distracted him and forced him to lose a game of 'Mortal Kombat'. He has been sent to prison for 18 years and ordered to pay compensation to the mother of 95,000€ Many compensation awards in Spain are nonsensical as those fined are often without assets. Also, as there is often a long delay before the case is heard, most of the accused transfer their assets, if they have any, to relatives before the court case commences.

More than 600,000 women were the victims of macho domestic violence in Spain last year, according to a new report from Amnesty International. The report also claims that the Government's three year old legislation is not working and needs changing quickly. Amnesty also stated that quality health care, as part of an integrated response, with legal advice was still not in place for the victims. The lack of appropriate training of police and social workers was also lamented.

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ICELAND (Overseas Imports) are now open for business in the Avda. de Cortes Valenciana, in Torreveja. Tel:922 735 160. Normal hours are 9AM to 8PM, Mon to Sat. But they are also open Sundays during the summer season.

Lowri from the bungalows gave me a flyer for 'British TV' which has been distributed throughout the 'new phase.'

The flyer bears the unbeatable claim 'Satisfaction guaranteed with every erection.'

Whats Up? continued

ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation, set off five explosive devices in northern Spain on July 20th. The entrance to a Barclay's Bank was damaged in Viscaya and there were four explosions on various beaches in the Cantabrian coast in the north. Last Tuesday a small bomb was detonated in Torremolinos. No one was injured. The Spanish and French police have had some notable successes recently in capturing ETA suspects. They believe that they may have foiled a bombing campaign in Andalusia planned for this August.

Three arabs who were among the 21 found guilty in relation to the Madrid Train Bombing case have been released by the Supreme Court. A Spaniard who was sentenced to five years for supplying explosives was also released. The court found that they were convicted on insufficient evidence.

A judge, who had connections with a former real-estate assessor in Marbella during a period of notorious corruption, has appeared in court accused of bribery, perversion of the course of justice and other charges. If found guilty he faces three years in prison, a fine of 213,000 € and a banning from holding public office for 19 years. The former assessor, Roca, who is at the centre of the long running Malaya case has said that he paid the judge 73,800€ for 'favourable treatment.'

Residents in the Orihuela village of La Murada have been suffering from a wave of robberies in recent weeks. Residents are now patrolling the streets at night and one owner has put up large signs outside his house stating in Spanish 'We have cash only for one day's needs and no jewels. If you want to break in please ring the bell and we will open the door and give you 15 minutes before calling the local police.'

There has been an increase in burglaries in the Dream Hills 2 and Los Balcones areas. Please take care, especially if you are over here on holidays by removing any 'car rental' stickers off the car - dead giveaway! More than 30,000 aspiring driving instructors took a nationwide exam a fortnight ago and 99% of them failed the exam. The applicants, who paid up to 1,200€ each to prepare for and take the exam, have launched a series of protests around the Madrid area. Their main complaint is that some of the questions in the 30-question test were ludicrous. Among the questions were such gems as 'How fast does a small horse- carriage travel?' and 'When do the effects of LSD wear off?' Among the generally odd and ambiguous questions was also the following: 'Does driving with lights on consume fuel? A) No; B) 0.5% or C) 2%.' Maybe the person who set the questions was on LSD and just wanted to know when it would wear off!

Spanish professional football clubs owe over 607 million euro in back taxes according to the *Agencia Tributaria*. This does not include significant amounts of social security payments also owed. Six clubs are filing for bankruptcy protection at present.

Chuck Berry, the rock legend, recently failed to appear for two concerts in Spain. The performer, who has returned to the States, is being asked to return 18,000€ he received in deposit advances. 'Go, Johnny Go!' Orihuela has been judged the least transparent municipality in a survey of 100 Spanish municipalities. Transparency International looked at a total of 80 indicators measuring the amount of information available to local residents and the relationship between the residents and the administration. Torre Vieja were rated as the second worst.

Major developments are expected in a matter of weeks in relation to a large supplier of TV to the English-speaking population in the Costa Blanca area. Major taxation issues and a change of ownership are rumoured.

'The Irish gave the bagpipes to the Scots as a joke, but the Scots haven't seen the joke yet.' (Oliver Herford)



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Restaurant Review by 'Julia Scott' - 'Las Cuevas' at San Miguel de Salinas. Tele:966 723 432

How are you feeling today? No - really - how are you feeling? Hot? Bothered? Jaded? Suffering from a bit of 'ennui'? (Oh, just look it up! No! Try the French dictionary!) Well, I have the remedy!

Did you know that if you jump in the car now, you could be sitting in a beautiful, authentic Spanish restaurant - in a cave - in just seven minutes! Just drive to San Miguel de Salinas and follow the signs for 'Las Cuevas' - the caves.

When you arrive, park your car in the shade of the pink trees in the quiet yard. Walk into the cool patio, set about with glass-topped tables made from ancient farm implements. Enter the cave through a muslin curtain drifting in the breeze and you will be greeted by the owner. He is proud to show you round six interconnected cave rooms furnished with charmingly mismatched tables and chairs, antique candelabra, mirrors and pictures. Sepia family portraits adorn the walls. The tables alone get your appetite whetted - they are laid with snowy white linen table clothes and napkins, tall gleaming wine glasses shine like soap-bubbles and the cutlery sparkles. You can view glass cases filled with fossils, flints and cypress cones unearthed during the recent refurbishment - the cave has been inhabited for '*tres siglos y mas*' - three centuries & more!

On a recent visit there were three of us dining, it was lunch-time on a Saturday. We had a *chorizo* style paté with cranberry dip and a basket of toast and crackers (other starters are available). Everything was pronounced delicious!

Our daughter's *dorada* (fish), my husband's duck and my steak, all met with huge approval. The vegetables were properly cooked (not boiled to death) and there wasn't a chip in sight. My steak was perfectly cooked to my requirements - pink, tender, melt-in-the-mouth! We drank beer as it was such a hot day.

We decided not to have puddings as the portions were huge but on a previous visit we had a seriously decadent chocolate mousse cosyng-up on a pretty flowery plate with a lemon sorbet, all drizzled over with a honey sauce. To die for!

As it was my birthday a lit candle was produced, along with a posy of orange lantana blooms and mint, all tied up with hairy twine! The señora then celebrated the occasion with a Spanish song about love and spending time with family and friends (I think!).

The euphoria lasted even when the bill arrived. €65 for two courses for three people - but can you put a price on such a special event?

Just Desserts?

A cat died and went to Heaven. God met her at the gates and said, 'You have been a good cat all these years. Anything you want is yours for the asking.'

The cat thought for a minute and then said, 'All my life I lived on a farm and slept on hard wooden floors. I would like a real fluffy pillow to sleep on.'

God said, 'Say no more.' Instantly the cat had a huge fluffy pillow.

A few days later, six mice were killed in an accident and they all went to Heaven together. God met the mice at the gates with the same offer that He made to the cat?

The mice said, 'Well, we have had to run all of our lives: from cats, dogs, and even people with brooms! If we could just have some little roller skates, we would not have to run again.'?

God answered, 'It is done.' All the mice had beautiful little roller skates?

About a week later, God decided to check on the cat. He found her sound asleep on her fluffy pillow. God gently awakened the cat and asked, 'Is everything okay? How have you been doing? Are you happy?'

The cat replied, 'Oh, it is WONDERFUL. I have never been so happy in my life. The pillow is so fluffy, and those little Meals on Wheels you have been sending over are delicious!'

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Ladies & Gents

Suggested new motto for the UK -
FATSO, DIPSO, ASBO, TESCO.
(Anon)

Accident

There was a horrible car crash on the N332 by Punta Prima this week. When the emergency services arrived, they found an Essex girl trapped in the wreckage with blood all over her.

"Where are you bleeding from?" asked the Paramedic.

"Romford!" she replied.

NEW PET BYLAWS IN ORIHUELA

Within the last twelve months, the city of Alicante introduced new bylaws in an attempt to regulate pet ownership in the city. This was followed by Torrevieja who introduced similar legislation and now Orihuela has followed suit introducing new bylaws relating to pet ownership. For the purpose of this article I will refer solely dog ownership.

Dogs can give lots of pleasure to their owners, but there can be occasions when 'man's best friend' can be the harbinger of misery to many others. The unacceptable level of dog excrement on pavements throughout Spain is a real nuisance and health hazard but in this case it is often the owners who are to blame. However continuously barking dogs has to have one of the most dramatic effects on the quality of life here in Spain. It is not uncommon for dog owners to leave their dogs outside of their house or apartment during the day while they are at work, and true to its nature the dog or dogs will bark and howl at any noise or bark just as a sign of boredom to say - 'Hey! Hey! I'm here! Hey! Hey! The owners then come home from work, feed and make a fuss of the dogs who are then put outside for the remainder of the evening when the barking starts again.

It is fair to say that many Spaniards have spent much of their lives living in apartment blocks and have accordingly developed an immunity and acceptance of certain noise levels in their lives. When you speak to a Spaniard they will tell you that crying babies, family arguments, doors banging, late night parties and barking dogs are all *normal*. But constantly barking dogs destroy any peace one can come to expect in normal living and to continue to lose sleep at night because of barking dogs will have major detrimental effects on the physical and mental well-being of the neighbours. Dog poisonings are common in Spain, particularly in urbanisation areas. There were two dogs poisoned in Los Balcones two weeks ago. Whereas I certainly do not condone such actions, it is remarkable what some people will do to escape this scourge.

Barking dogs have been a recurring problem in both Dream Hills urbanisations. I managed to get a copy of the local bylaws in relation to Noise Regulations a few years ago hoping to get some legal reference to acceptable and unacceptable levels of animal noise. No such luck! There was plenty of information about acceptable decibel levels for cars, motorbikes, factories, offices, machinery etc but all it said about pet noise was that 'owners were expected to keep their animal's noises to an acceptable level/under control.'

The new legislation could offer some new help and relief IF THE LAWS ARE ENFORCED! It is one thing having a law on the statute book and another enforcing it. Will the police enforce the new laws - who knows?

Under the new laws all dogs must now have a microchip implanted by a vet and must be registered on a list at the local department for health. Dogs are not allowed to be kept on patios, balconies or solariums if they disturb neighbours. Dogs must be kept on a lead when walking and dog faeces must be collected with a plastic bag and put in a bin. Dogs must also be kept in the back seat of cars and a net or barrier must be installed to ensure that the dog does not get to the front seat. Only licensed guide dogs are allowed on beaches, bars restaurants and shops. Dog owners will be held responsible for any damage or inconvenience caused by their pets. Fines will be applied to those who fail to comply with the new laws.

There is also a raft of new rules in relation to dangerous breeds where the owner must now apply for a special licence and the dog must be signed on to a special register in the town hall. These dogs must now wear a muzzle, have a special lead and they are not allowed to be walked close to concentrated gatherings of people such as schools, leisure areas, parks etc. A special warning notice must also be hung on the walls of a property which houses such dogs. It will no doubt take some time for the new laws to filter down to local law enforcement officers.

I am hoping to get a Spanish copy of the full bylaws on this issue when they are published and will report more at a future date. The town hall plans to circulate leaflets relating to the new laws in German and English and time will be given to allow people to adapt to the new requirements. I do hope this will not develop into another 'black-hole' of bureaucratic procrastination.

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What is Pilates? By Viviana.

Pilates is a system of exercise and physical movement designed to stretch, strengthen, and balance the body. Invented by Joseph H. Pilates about 90 years ago, this method, increases lung capacity and circulation through deep, healthy breathing. Strength and flexibility, particularly of the abdomen and back muscles, coordination-both muscular and mental, are key components in an effective Pilates programme. Posture, balance, and core strength are all greatly increased. Joseph Pilates called this method "Contrology", and the goal was to control every muscle with the mind through movement. This method never isolates a muscle, it works all muscles as a whole creating equilibrium in the body. Bone density and joint health improve, and many experience positive body awareness for the first time. Pilates teaches balance and control of the body, and that capacity spills over into other areas of one's life. We can say that all ages can practise this method, so long as it is not forbidden by a doctor. Pregnancy or a recent operation could be such a case.

It is really important to understand that Pilates can be practised in two different ways: one is on the floor, specifically called "Pilates mat" and the other one is through special machines called, reformer, trapeze, Lader barrel and others.

A little bit of history...

Joseph H. Pilates was born in Germany, in 1880. A sickly child who suffered from asthma, rickets and rheumatic fever, he dedicated his entire life to becoming physically stronger. Joe began studying body-building, yoga and gymnastics, and by the age of 14 was fit enough to pose for anatomical charts. He came to believe that the "modern" life-style, bad posture, and inefficient breathing lay at the roots of poor health. In 1912 Pilates moved to England, earning a living as a boxer, circus-performer and self-defence trainer. During World War I the British authorities interned him with other German citizens in a camp in the Isle of Man, where he trained other inmates in fitness and exercises. Here the beginnings of the Pilates Method began to take shape. On the ship to America he met his future wife Clara. In New York they founded the first "Pilates" Studio which they originally called "Contrology". Joseph dies at the age of 87 in 1967, leaving the future of the method in his wife's hands and Romana Kryzanowska, a protégée of "Joe"...

We want you to know that Pilates Mat classes will be held in "La Casita". We will hold a preliminary meeting in September to discuss which times are most suitable for you. At the moment possible times include, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Wednesday and Friday mornings. My contact number is 634820168, Viviana.

Shhhhhh.....

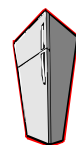
A Scotsman is sitting in a bar in Cuba and is minding his business when a man with a large black beard walks in. The man goes to the bar and orders a shot of whisky. The bartender serves him, the man drinks the whisky then starts walking out the door. The bartender says, "Hey aren't you going to pay for that?" The man says, "Excuse me, Castro's Army." The bartender says, "Alright then" and the man leaves.

A few minutes later another man with a large black beard walks in. The man goes to the bar and orders a shot of whisky. The bartender serves him, the man drinks the whisky then starts walking out the door. The bartender says, "Hey aren't you going to pay for that?" The man says, "Excuse me, Castro's Army." The bartender says "Alright then" and the man leaves.

The Scotsman gets an idea and walks up to the bar and orders a shot of whisky. He drinks the whisky then starts walking out the door. The bartender says, "Hey aren't you going to pay for that?" The Scotsman says, "Excuse me, Castro's Army." The bartender says, "Hey where is your big black beard?" The Scotsman thinks quickly. He lifts his kilt and says, "Secret Service!"

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Tax Tips

Non-Residents: You will no doubt be aware at this stage that the *Patrimonio* (Wealth Tax) has been abolished from the 1st of January 2008. However this particular tax is paid a year in arrears so you will still have to pay the tax for last year. The administration of this tax payment for non-residents has been a nice little earner for local solicitors. Their charges for this service are disproportionate to the amount of work involved. The government may still insist that non-residents pay something in tax towards deemed letting income. Rather than do this through solicitors I would recommend that you utilise the services of business such as a *gestor* or MAR Services, who advertise in this newsletter, and who provide a professional service at a reasonable cost. Always ask for a quotation first.

Residents: The new government's gift (bribe?) of 400 euro to income tax payers can now be availed of. If you are working and collect a regular wage or salary your allowances and tax paid should be adjusted accordingly. You will not receive a check for the 400 euro - it is not a rebate.

However if you are in receipt of a pension, say from the UK, you will be paying your income tax one year in arrears. Accordingly you will not receive the benefit of the 400 euro extra allowance until next year.

For those who are retired in Spain and paying income tax, but under the normal retirement age, it is worth remembering that all social security payments are deductible allowances from gross income. This may be worth checking out in instances where free health cover may be withdrawn or not renewed next year, and where private health insurance is too costly or does not cover existing ailments. Accordingly, depending on one's circumstances, it may be advantageous to just pay the social security. As an aside, not many people are aware that there is a little box in the Spanish Income Tax form, which when ticked, directs some of your tax paid to charities such as the Catholic Church, the Red Cross etc.

BANKS & BUILDERS

Grupo Santander, the massive Spanish banking group, has purchased the Alliance and Leicester bank for 1.575 billion € (a third of what it was worth in 2007), according to a statement to the Spanish stock market regulator CNMV. Alliance shareholders will get a Santander share for every three A&L shares held. It means a strengthening of the Spanish bank's position in the U.K., where it already purchased Abbey in 2004. The new plan would see the Alliance and Leicester merging with Abbey. The Magazine 'Euromoney' has named the Banco Santander, which is now one of the eight largest banks in the world, as the best bank in the world. The magazine praises its capacity for growth in today's context of a difficult market.

Generally the Spanish banks have been congratulating themselves for having escaped the 'Sub-Prime' debacle. This was not due to any clever investment decisions but rather the fact that the Bank of Spain prohibited the Spanish banks from dealing in off-balance sheet investments. Although the Spanish banks can feel good about this, the slump in both the construction and property markets, to which they are massively overexposed, has given them their own individual and long-term headache.

When a property is repossessed by a Spanish bank the house will usually go to a public auction. However if none of the bids reach 100% of the value of the mortgage, the Bank can keep the property and can then value the house at either the value of its mortgage or an arbitrary value placed on it by a surveyor, whichever is higher. The overvalued property is then kept on the Banks books as an 'asset' at an overvalued amount, or as is often the case, the property is off loaded to a newly created 'property company' 100% owned & financed by the bank.

In a market with falling housing prices this really means that the Spanish Bank's true financial state is a lot worse than the balance sheet would indicate.

The Spanish builder and real estate group, Martinsa Fadesa, one of the largest in the country, has suspended payments and presented plans for voluntary creditors – the Spanish equivalent of filing for bankruptcy protection, with debts in excess of 5.2 billion €. Although the group states that its assets are in the region 10.8 billion € its true debt is thought to be more in the region of 7 billion € plus. The company cannot meet its interest payments and there are more than 12,000 families with uncompleted homes. Some 45 Spanish banks are also thought to be effected and it will take some time to unravel the banking sectors true exposure. The PSOE Socialist party has asked for clarification on the relationship of Carlos Vela, who was employed by the troubled builder Martinsa as the companies number 2, after it is alleged, he was key to the approval of a 1 billion € loan to the company while he was still employed by the Caja Madrid bank! Interestingly he had returned to Caja Madrid a few days before the bankruptcy protection was applied for in Martinsa.

It is also now known that Martinsa denied to the regulatory body, CNMV, The National Council for Market Values, as late as June this year, that the company was in a risky position or had any liquidity problems.

The Adventures of Beauregard and Hortense

Beau & Hortense went to the funeral of Aunt Agatha who had borne 13 children.

She had 6 children in her first marriage. Her husband died. She soon married again and had 3 more children. Again, her husband died. But she remarried and this time had 4 more children.

At last, she finally died. Standing before her coffin, the priest prayed to the Lord above, thanking Him, for this loving woman who fulfilled his wish to "Go forth and multiply." In his eulogy, the priest said, "Lord, they're finally together."

Leaning over to wife, Beau quietly asked, "Horty, is he referring to her first, second or third husband?"

"Neither," replied Hortense, "I think he's referring to her legs."

Notes from La Casita

Our notes this month are on a very personal level.

As many of you know, Richard was admitted to Torrevieja hospital for an emergency operation. We are pleased to report that all went well and Richard is well on the way to a full recovery. Now he must take it easy for a month and no lifting - easier said than done, but we are taking things a day at a time. Richard and Marjory would like to thank everyone for their good wishes and our grateful thanks to the people who kept the regular events ticking over while they were indisposed.

Spanish lessons will resume after the short summer break on Tuesday 5th August. All other social activities continue as usual through August.



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Vive La Froggie!

What do you call 100,000 Frenchmen with their hands in the air?
 The army.

How many French troops does it take to defend Paris?
 We don't know, it hasn't been tried yet.

I joined the French army yesterday.
 Was a bit confused though - the body armour only covers the back.

Have you seen those French Army Knives?
 No scissors or tweezers, just 6 corkscrews and a white flag.

What's the difference between Frenchmen and toast?
 You can make soldiers out of toast.

MAINLY HUMOUR

Stand Back

One day a father and his five year old son went to the bank to cash a cheque.
 There was a few people in front of them waiting for the bank teller. The lady in front of them was a rather large well dressed business lady.
 The kid could not help but notice her size. "Dad look at her! She is so huge!"
 The father replied, "Be quiet! You must be polite and don't hurt her feelings."
 The kid persisted, "But dad she must weigh as much as a truck!"
 The father, rather embarrassed, said, "Stop it or I'll take you outside!"
 Just about then the ladies pager or mobile goes off ...
 "beep... beep... beep..."
 The kid screams "Dad look out! She's backing up!"

National Health

After having their 11th child, a Middlesborough couple decided that was enough, as the social wouldn't buy them a bigger bed and they weren't strong enough to nick one.

The husband went to his doctor and told him that he and his wife didn't want to have any more children.

The doctor told him there was a procedure called a vasectomy that would fix the problem but it was expensive. A less costly alternative was to go home, get a firework, light it, put it in a beer can, then hold the can up to his ear and count to 10. The 'Smoggie' said to the doctor, 'I may not be the smartest guy in the world, but I don't see how putting a firework in a beer can next to my ear is going to help me.'
 'Trust me, it will do the job', said the doctor.

So the man went home, lit a banger and put it in a beer can. He held the can up to his ear and began to count: '1, 2, 3, 4, 5,' at which point he paused, placed the beer can between his legs so he could continue counting on his other hand.....

This procedure also works in Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, parts of Bradford and most of Wales. (RickRoak)

GI'S A JOB!

A guy walked into his local dole office in Liverpool and said to the assistant 'You know, I hate signing on, I really must work, I'd much rather have a steady job and work all week rather than just hang about.'

The assistant picked up a file and said, 'You have excellent timing, this job opening has just come in from a very wealthy old man who wants a chauffeur/bodyguard for his beautiful daughter.

Because of the long hours, you would be expected to live in the two bed roomed apartment above the garage, where the top of the range Mercedes you will drive is kept. All your food, clothing and expenses will be provided.

You would also be expected to escort the daughter on long overseas holidays, maybe three or four times a year.... and if asked,... satisfy her sexual needs.

The job also comes with a salary of £50,000 a year.'

The guy stared in wide-eyed amazement and finally said, 'You're bullshitting me - aren't you?'

The assistant said 'Yeah, well you started it.'

He Folded!

Six retired Irishmen were playing poker in O'Leary's apartment when Paddy Murphy loses \$500 on a single hand, clutches his chest and drops dead at the table.

Showing respect for their fallen brother, the other five continue playing standing up.

Michael O'Conner looks around and asks, "Oh, me boys, someone got to tell Paddy's wife. Who will it be?"

They draw straws. Liam Gallagher picks the short one. They tell him to be discreet, be gentle, don't make a bad situation any worse.

Gallagher goes over to Murphy's house and knocks on the door.

Mrs. Murphy answers and asks what he wants.

Gallagher declares: "Your husband just lost \$500 and is afraid to come home"

"Tell him to drop dead!" says Murphy's wife.

"O.K. I'll go tell him." says Gallagher.

(Sean)

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Trial Run?

A little girl is sitting on her grandpa's lap and studying the wrinkles on his old face. She gets up the nerve to rub her fingers over the wrinkles. Then she touches her own face and looks more puzzled. Finally the little girl asks, "Grandpa, did God make you?" "He sure did sweetheart, a long time ago," replies her grandpa. "Well, did God make me?" asks the little girl. "Yes, He did, and that wasn't too long ago," answers her grandpa. "Well," says the little girl, "He's certainly doing a lot better job these days isn't He?"

Review: All Bar Sue, Via Park V, by 'Julia Scott.'

Sometimes you just want to go to a bar where everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came. If that sounds familiar then you're probably thinking of 'All Bar Sue' in Via Park 5.

First impressions are of a unique blend of contemporary design and relaxing comfort. The suede chairs in tones of *cafe au lait*, bitter chocolate and rich orange, the solid dark wood tables and the squishy leather chesterfields, all conspire to draw you in and persuade you to linger.

When you enter you are guaranteed to be made welcome by Sue, the manageress, whose genuine warmth and attention to detail imbue this friendly bar. Sue's staff, Viviana and Matias from Argentina, bring their own special skills to the bar - Matias is extremely knowledgeable about wine and, if asked, will make recommendations and Viviana can teach anyone, and I mean anyone, to Salsa! And lovely Natalie will take your order and serve you with a smile!

On Sunday nights you can take part in the quiz and bingo to win Granville's gallon of beer! On Mondays an affiliated drama group meets at La Estacion in Torrevieja, contact David Whitney on 966704097 for more details. Expeditions into the 'Real Spain' are also being developed. The 'Successful Slimming' group meets on Tuesdays at 11.30 a.m. and 'Wine Appreciation' takes place at 7.30 p.m. in the capable hands of Matias. Wednesday night is 'Salsa Night!' Friday night is Theme Night - keep an eye on the notice board for details. The recent Argentinian evening with its delicious *empanadas* (pastries) and Milanese chicken was a roaring success!

The speciality of the kitchen is *tapas* but they're nothing like other *tapas*! We love the *albondigas* - plump meatballs in a piquant tomato sauce and the classic perfectly cooked lasagne. But be adventurous - read the menu - the choice is huge! Current special offers include 6 *tapas* and glass of wine - €15. The bar also contains an excellent range of wines and beers to suit the most discerning palate.

The 'Salsa Night' was great fun. When the cha-cha music starts you can't keep still, 1,2 - 1,2,3, bam, bam, - bam bam bam. To begin with I did feel awkward - even attempting to explain the concept of 'two left feet' in my 'baby Spanish' - don't try it! But suddenly, under Viviana's patient and clear tuition, there I was - dancing! Wow! We wiggled, we turned, we spun, we had 'attitude', we even - God help us! - attempted to look 'sexy'! What a night! We staggered home after midnight, drunk only on the music, high on success and intoxicated with pure, simple joy! I can't wait for next Wednesday! I hope I'll see you there!

Sol Productions were filming the bar's activities on Friday the 25th of July. The programme will be aired in September. 'All Bar Sue' appears on Facebook, log-on to see yourselves and show your friends!

Phone 616 815 360 for details of any of the events or activities at the bar.

Three Men on a Hike

Three men were hiking through a forest when they came upon a large raging, violent river. Needing to get to the other side, the first man prayed: 'God, please give me the strength to cross the river.'

Poof! .. God gave him big arms and strong legs and he was able to swim across in about 2 hours, having almost drowned twice. After witnessing that, the second man prayed: 'God, please give me strength and the tools to cross the river'

Poof! .. God gave him a rowboat and strong arms and strong legs and he was able to row across in about an hour after almost capsizing once. Seeing what happened to the first two men, the third man prayed: 'God, please give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross the river.' Poof! .. He was turned into a woman. She checked the map, hiked one hundred yards up-stream and walked across the bridge.

'If at first you don't succeed, do it the way your wife told you!' (Ann Ball)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you interested in joining a group of Spanish and English-speaking people who will meet to practise and improve what they have learned in language lessons? This would be an opportunity for the Spanish and English-speaking neighbours to get together and talk, chat and socialise to the mutual benefit of all.

Venue: La Casita
Cost: Just one euro
Frequency: One evening per week.
Cooperative, democratic and mutually beneficial!

Perhaps you have some Spanish friends or neighbours who would be interested, - or if you have any ideas on the proposal why not contact me, Joyce Sinclair on 966 799 544.

Bear with me!

In Alaska's National Forests, a tourists guide was giving a talk to a group of tourists about hiking in grizzly bear territory: "Most bear encounters occur when hikers are being extra quiet along the trails in hopes of viewing wildlife, accidentally stumble into bears. The resulting surprise can be catastrophic." To avoid this, he suggested that each hiker wear tiny bells on their clothing to warn the bears of their presence. "Also," he said further, "be especially cautious when you see signs of bears in the area, especially when you see bear droppings.

" One tourist asked, "How do you identify bear droppings?"

"Oh that's easy," the guide explained, "it's the ones with all the tiny bells in them!"

US Politics

"It was kind of surprising; they really love Obama in Germany. He's like a rock star over there. It's impressive until you realize that David Hasselhoff is also like a rock star over there." --Jimmy Kimmel

"Bill Clinton has already promised to be at the Democratic convention. He figures since the convention's being held in Denver, he can join the Mile High Club without ever leaving the ground." --Jay Leno

"President Bush said that, after he retires, he wants to write a book. ... Bush said, he's not sure if it will be about politics or about his personal life, but he is sure it will be a pop-up book." --Conan O'Brien

"Barack Obama is now denying that he is email pals with the beautiful actress, Scarlett Johansson. Remember that story? They were saying that Scarlett Johansson and Barack Obama were emailing each other. He says no, it's not true. In fact his exact words were 'I did not have textual relations with that woman.'" --Jay Leno

"We're leaning more and more about John and Cindy McCain. He's on this big biography tour. I guess his wife Cindy is worth over \$100 million because the family made money selling Budweiser beer. So he has a wife 20 years younger than him, free beer, and unlimited money. I think I speak for all guys when I ask, 'Why is he running for president?'" --Jay Leno

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