

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

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Bienvenido a todos!

Sunday May 22 will see local and regional elections throughout Spain. There has certainly been some improvement to the Orihuela Costa area and its facilities during the last four years, particularly when you compare it to the term under the previous administration, when the coast was largely ignored and just a 'cash cow' for Orihuela City. However, much still needs to be done and the local budget greatly increased. What has been most disappointing about the coming local elections is the total absence of non-Spanish Europeans on the ruling Partido Popular's (PP) election list, this despite the large number of non-Spanish Europeans living on the Orihuela Costa. It is a similar story in Torrevieja with almost 53% of the population being non-Spanish. With such a huge non-Spanish resident population, there is only one non-Spaniard on the list, and he has been placed at the bottom of the list in a totally unelectable and token position.

The opposition parties in the Orihuela Costa - The Greens, CLR/CLARO and the PSOE (Socialists), all have non-Spanish candidates close to the top of their lists illustrating the importance they attach to their representation. Unfortunately the PP obviously do not feel the same. If they did, their local election lists would reflect this. Although they are undoubtedly happy with the substantial and sustaining wealth generated by the expats in this area, they clearly prefer to exclude us from any meaningful participation in the political process. No doubt they feel that they do a better job without us, but as you will be aware if you have lived in Spain for any length of time, this is clearly not the case.

Personally I believe the exclusion of non-Spanish from the list is more than just a slight, particularly as the Regional PP Government recommended their inclusion. It is all very well to 'harp-on' about integration, but if we are excluded from the political process and decision making, then the word is a nonsense.

I have often thought that it would be much more practical for Orihuela Costa to be linked with Torrevieja rather than an inland city such as Orihuela. The two coastal areas have much in common with the same problems, assets, geography and demographics. Surely it makes better sense. Orihuela City could then take in such areas as Los Montesinos, San Miguel and Bigastro. There are currently 8,114 *ayuntamientos* or town halls in Spain, which is excessive! Wastage, duplication, bureaucracy, corruption and favouritism is rampant. A much tighter ship is needed if Spain is to become more competitive and progressive. To appear to be doing well in boom times is easy; the real test is when times are tough!

A big thank you to Sue from Playa Flamenca, Dawn Saunders from DH2 and Peter & Jackie from La Casita for their generous donations towards costs.

No history article this month due to time constraints (insufficient research!). Please support our generous advertisers.

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Angela's Cartoon



'Don't even think about it!'

What's Up?

PM Zapatero has announced that he will not be standing as the socialist leader at the next General Election. The Socialists face a drubbing in next month's local and regional elections, which should prove a good indicator for the General Election next year.

The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) say they will no longer back the Zapatero administration or support the 2012 budgets if Bildu - another party which the police say is riddled with ETA supporters - is not allowed to field candidates in the local elections next month. Zapatero has had to buy-off or cave-in to demands from both Basque and Catalan nationalists on many occasions in order to keep the Socialists in power.

A Guardia Civil was injured in a clash between the Royal Navy and the Guardia Civil in the waters off Gibraltar last Sunday. The clash occurred while the Spanish were chasing drug-runners. As mentioned before, these clashes are becoming more numerous and dangerous, with little 'give' on either side; all to the benefit of the drug dealers who are using these confrontations to their advantage.

One of ETA's most bloody assassins, Antón Troitiño, was released from prison in April after serving just 24 years of a 2,500 year sentence for killing 22 people, mostly Guardia Civil members. A legal loophole means that he has served just over a year in prison for each person he killed. (Another ETA murderer served 22 years for killing two.) Following a vociferous public outcry and massive political pressure, the Constitutional Court ordered his re-arrest. But guess what? Troitiño has now 'gone walkabout' and cannot be found. When pressed why Troitiño was not under surveillance by the police, the Minister of the Interior said that it would be illegal!

NOTE: If you are paying a mortgage in Spain, BBVA, Caixa Galicia and Cajamar have been told to no longer issue any mortgages with the 'ground clause' which stops tracking mortgages from going as low as the Euribor. The three savings banks are also obliged to recalculate the mortgage payments on all valid contracts which contain this controversial clause. They cannot use the clause in any new policy. If you have a Spanish mortgage check it out now to ensure that you are not being unfairly charged by the bank. Don't take the word of a dozy counter clerk and do not expect the banks to volunteer anything, particularly if you are not a native!

Telefónica has announced that it is to cut its workforce in Spain by 20% in three years. It means that 5,600 of the 28,000 jobs are to go. Telefónica made profits of €10.167 billion in 2010, 31% more than in the previous year. According to Typically Spanish, the workers whose jobs are threatened in Telefónica are not complaining however as the ERE (redundancy) planned will pay those taking early retirement 70% of their wage up to the age of 61, 34% of their wage to 65, and help with half the payments if the workers have not been in the company for 35 years. This is in addition to any redundancy payments. The 1,900 (!) directors in the company will benefit from €450 million in incentives over the next five years.

The Hacienda's latest estimate on the size of the black economy in Spain is €82 billion - 8% of GDP. They say that the regions of the country with the largest black economies are Cataluña, Madrid and Andalucía.

Cataluña is to eliminate succession or inheritance tax when estates are passed to close family members. Its implementation is expected to cost €130 million. The tax will remain in place in other cases from the third degree of consanguinity.

The end of March saw a new record of 4.9 million unemployed according to the National Statistics Institute.

Alicante's El Altet is the second most profitable airport in Spain, the AENA Spanish Airports Authority has announced. It brought in before-tax profits of 43.78 million € last year, with growth of more than 5%. Passenger volume was up by 2.7%, and the number of flights by 0.3% on 2009. Close to 9.4 million people used El Altet's facilities last year. Palma de Mallorca's Son Sant Joan Airport was slightly ahead, with its 43.9 million € before-tax profits making it AENA's most profitable airport in 2010.

Ryanair has announced that they will cut back its Alicante base by up to 80% from October this year, following AENA Alicante's decision to force Ryanair to use airbridges, and pay over €2m p.a. extra for these 'unnecessary facilities.' The airline said in a press release that it has been operating at Alicante Airport for more than 5 years without the use of airbridges, claiming the decision by AENA Alicante to be an 'abuse of its monopoly'. The company is understood to have made a formal complaint about the matter to the Spanish government and to the European Commission.

The EU has fined Unilever and Proctor & Gamble €15 million for price fixing. Henkel also took part in the arrangement, but obtained immunity from the EU for bringing news of the pact to the authorities. The three companies had reached an agreement to coordinate prices over three years and products affected included Ariel and Skip. Ethics and morals now seem totally absent from big business.

Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, the PP Mayor of Madrid, has said that he wants to clear the streets of all the homeless. One newspaper reported that Gallardón wants to confine the homeless, sending them to 'an obligatory residence'. The paper notes those who work with the homeless think the idea is unconstitutional and consider such statements criminalize the homeless. What's next? Striped pyjamas and tattooed numbers on their arms?

The price of rental property in Spain has fallen by as much as 30% over the past six years, and experts expect rents to continue falling in cities such as Madrid, Barcelona and Zaragoza. The amount of property available for rent has increased by 300% in some regions.

Private prosecution have been brought by around 5,000 people affected by the illegal air traffic controllers walk-out on December 3 and 4, 2010. The total claim for costs incurred and moral damages is estimated to reach more than 10 million €. The people are being represented by the Crendes & Calvo-Sotelo firm of lawyers.

From June 10, the government will make €80 per car available to drivers who choose energy efficient tyres. Total initial budget for the project is €4.8 million.

A white horse walks into a pub, pulls up a stool and orders a pint.

The landlord pours him a tall, frothy mug and says, 'You know, we have a drink named after you.'

To which the horse replies, 'What, Eric?'

The Spanish press now believe that the early retirement scandal in the socialist Junta de Andalucía may reach 3,790 cases. In the latest case to emerge, seven people were given early retirement benefits from a mining company which did not exist. The investigating judge demanded and received the minutes of the meetings of the regional government for the previous ten years. He was afraid that they might 'get lost.'

The Government is now drawing up new legislation on early retirement schemes. Companies showing a profit which want to offer early retirement to workers would have to compensate the State for doing so. The measure, which would only affect companies with more than 500 employees, could be in place before the summer, in time to affect Telefónica which has already announced plans to lay off 5,600 workers.

The Barcelona Rock Music Museum, the first in Europe, opened its doors on March 31 in the Las Arenas commercial centre of the city. The museum has individual rooms dedicated to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Spanish Rock. Among the 6,000+ items on show, one of Michael Jackson's jackets, a John Lennon guitar, a guitar used by Freddy Mercury in his last concert, a record with the Beatles on one side and the Stones on the other and a Rolling Stones ticket signed by all members of the band.

The El Corte Inglés department store in Málaga has been fined €60,000 for recording people walking past its building in the street, and by nearby parked cars. The case was brought before the Data Protection Agency by a member of the public.

A Romanian man has been arrested after strangling his pregnant wife in Madrid, and then showing her body to his family in Romania by webcam. It was his family in Romania who informed the police who then proceeded to make the arrest of the alleged aggressor in Torrejón de Ardoz, Madrid. The man had told his family that when the victim's 13 year old sister arrived, she would suffer the same treatment. Spanish police made the arrest before any further violence took place.

Police in Torrevieja believe that an arsonist is at work in the area of the Las Lagunas Natural Park. Five fires have been reported in the area since March.

How many existentialists does it take to change a light bulb?

Two. One to screw it in, and one to observe how the light bulb itself symbolises a single incandescent beacon of subjective reality in a netherworld of endless absurdity, reaching towards the ultimate horror of a maudlin cosmos of bleak, hostile nothingness.

(I'm sorry I asked. Ed)

Three new marriages!

The first man married a woman from Essex. He told her that she was to do the dishes and house cleaning. It took a couple of days, but on the third day, he came home to see a clean house and dishes washed and put away.

The second man married a woman from Sussex. He gave his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, dishes and the cooking. The first day he didn't see any results, but the next day he saw it was better. By the third day, he saw his house was clean, the dishes were done and there was a huge dinner on the table.

The third man married a lass from Newcastle. He ordered her to keep the house cleaned, dishes washed, lawn mowed, laundry washed, and hot meals on the table for every meal. He said the first day he didn't see anything, the second day he didn't see anything but by the third day, some of the swelling had gone down and he could see a little out of his left eye, and his arm was healed enough that he could fix himself a sandwich and load the dishwasher.

He still has some difficulty when he pees.

The Traffic Department in Spain often demands attendance at re-education courses for drivers convicted of speeding or drink driving. Drivers who also wish to recover points on their licence can attend these courses. A 50-year-old man in Alicante arrived late at one of the classes last month and was refused entry because he was two hours late. The driver then threatened to bomb the school and stab the instructor before he was taken away by the police.

A new judgement from the Spanish Supreme Court has ruled that divorced couples should pay the mortgage 50/50 and not on the basis of each person's income. It considers the debt is part of the conjugal partnership, and overturned on appeal a previous sentence from a provincial court which saw the man obliged to pay 80% and the woman 20%.

Spain's outdated military law is currently being revised. To date, failing to salute a superior officer or being incorrectly dressed would earn you 30 days in the 'brig.' It has now been decided to issue fines or pay-deductions for most of the minor offences.

27 people, 21 of them ITV vehicle inspectors in Alicante, have been arrested in a scam where written-off caravans were being resold to the public. More than 400 vehicles had been sent for scrap as unfit to be on the roads after suffering serious damage in floods which hit France in 2008. The Interior Ministry reported that the Czech company which bought the vehicles, instead of breaking them up for spare parts, repaired them and fitted them with new plates and vehicle identification numbers. 33 were sold on to an Alicante company for 9,000 € each and false vehicle inspection documents were issued. The caravans, which the Ministry said posed a serious risk on the roads and for their occupants, were then sold as new at some 10,000 € below the market price. The total amount defrauded is put at more than 1 million €.

You may have noticed that I have not been reporting any major drug stories for the last couple of months. This is not because of any lack of them - far from it, major seizures are almost a daily occurrence - but I felt that you might be 'overdosing' on the 'druggie' news. So with all this high profile stuff going on, the local police in Alicante were anxious not to be left out of the news. Consequently last weekend, these brave boys arrested nine people in Alicante.....for pissing in the streets! This carries a maximum fine of €751. You can all sleep soundly in your beds at night knowing that these men will unflinchingly protect your rights and liberties.

Research suggests that despite having much more materially than previous generations, Britain is no happier than it was half a century ago. Experts warn that unless they undergo a “radical cultural change”, Britain will slide into unprecedented depths of despair blighted by rising rates of suicide and depression. A group of eminent British thinkers from the worlds of education, economics and politics have launched a campaign to halt the nation’s psychological decline.

Action for Happiness a mass movement to promote mental well being, calls on people to address 10 key deficiencies in their lives to counter our growing gloom. Led by Lord Layard, Professor of economics at the London School of Economics, it warns that we do not give enough to others, have lost the art of connecting with those around us, and no longer possess a sense of belonging in society. Our happiness is also being hampered by a blinkered approach to the world around us and a lack of exercise, direction, resilience and ambition, the study claims.

The 10 secrets to a happy life from Action for Happiness. (The suggestions in brackets are mine)

1. GIVING

Do things for others - volunteer to work for a charity in your spare time. (There are plenty of charitable organisations around the Orihuela Costa and Torrevieja, such as HELP, Help at Home, animal charities and many more.)

RELATING

Connect with people - get in touch with friends with whom you have lost contact. (The internet is ideal for this. Facebook and similar social networking sites can be a colossal waste of time but they can also help you to reach out to old friends and new. If computers are ‘not your thing’ then pop down to La Casita on Friday mornings for the ‘coffee morning’ and meet other local residents and ‘chew the fat’.)

3. EXERCISING

Take care of your body - go for a run. (Okay, this is often not always a practical option but there are a number of easy short walks around our area and alongside the swimming pools. Better still, take your neighbour’s dog for an occasional walk. The dog will be ‘well chuffed’ and become a new friend, and you will probably get a better Christmas card from your neighbour, rather than the ‘cheapo’ you got last year! Go swimming or if you have a kamakazi urge to venture on the local roads, try cycling!)

4. APPRECIATING

Notice the world around - take time to appreciate wildlife in your area. (Now that major building works have ceased in this area, wildlife has returned. There is a noticeable return of bird-life - I heard a cuckoo last week - and I have noticed squirrels in the *barranco* (ravine) near the pools, but be careful of sharp inclines when walking there. If you are not a wild-life fan, then why not pop around to the Via Parks and have a chuckle at the sunburnt tourists - these are great places for people-watching while you are enjoying a purely medicinal libation.)

5. TRYING OUT

Keep learning new things - learn a new language. (There is no excuse for not learning some Spanish. You don’t have to be an expert or even good at it, and there are classes, tapes, disks etc to help you pick up at least a little of the language. If your language skills are zero there are dance classes, cycling & walking trips and plenty of other activities for you to try out. Buy The Costa Blanca News on a Friday, only €1.80, and it lists lots of local activities etc.)

6. DIRECTION

Have goals to look forward to - make resolutions and stick to them. (Most of our readers have achieved a major personal goal in living, retiring or working in Spain. Still, there are plenty of other goals - smoke less, drink more, lose weight, see the kids & grandkids more often, duck the taxman - the list is limited only by your imagination and your willingness to set goals for yourself.)

7. RESILIENCE

Find ways to bounce back - learn from defeats to do things better in the future. (I particularly like the quotation attributed to one of the great basketball players, Michael Jordan, ‘I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game winning shot... and I missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that’s precisely why I succeed.’ Muhammad Ali also came up with this gem, ‘Inside of a ring or out, ain’t nothing wrong with going down. It’s staying down that’s wrong.’)

8. EMOTION



Take a positive approach - focus on the happy moments of your life rather than the sad. (Carl Jung wrote, ‘The word “happiness” would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness.’ Everybody has had some sadness in their lives, a problem arising when sadness leads to depression. Sadness can be a creative tool to musicians, actors and writers, but too much of it and you will drown. I particularly like Audrey Hepburn’s comment, ‘If my world were to cave in tomorrow, I would look back on all the pleasures, excitements and worthwhilenesses I have been lucky enough to have had. Not the sadness, not my miscarriages or my father leaving home, but the joy of everything else. It will have been enough.’)

9. ACCEPTANCE

Be comfortable with who you are - do not dwell on your flaws. (Flaws and imperfections are part of the human condition. Do not dwell on your own shortcomings, other people will do that for you!)

10. MEANING

Be part of something bigger - join a society or club. (There are plenty of these in our area, from acting societies to writer’s clubs. Why not join one of the political parties and help to try and bring worthwhile change to the coast. Why not join the urbanisation committee or Neighbourhood Watch committee in your area? The only person holding you back is you!)


Happiness

Happiness is a good martini, a good meal, a good cigar, and a good woman - or a bad woman, depending on how much happiness you can stand. George Burns



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New laws to combat Black Economy

Today, May 29, the cabinet of the Spanish Government have approved new measures to tackle the submerged or black economy. Under the plan, employers will have until July 31 to regularise their employees without any fines being imposed. Despite the fact that the company will only pay the social security quotas from the moment the worker is officially affiliated, the Government has said it is 'not an amnesty'.

After July 31, sanctions/fines will be imposed on offending businesses between 1.6 and 5 times higher than previously - as much as €400,000, and any worker found working in the submerged economy while collecting unemployment pay will be fined a minimum of €10,000.

Companies are unhappy as they now have extra responsibilities regarding the contracting of workers and some have criticised that they will now have to act like work inspectors.

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Dirty Joke

A woman went up to the bar in Punta Prima. She gestured alluringly to the bartender who approached her immediately. She seductively signalled that he should bring his face closer to hers. As he did, she gently caressed his full beard. "Are you the manager?" she asked, softly stroking his face with both hands.. "Actually, no," he replied. "Can you get him for me? I need to speak to him," she said, running her hands beyond his beard and into his hair. "I'm afraid I can't," breathed the bartender. "Is there anything I can do?" "Yes.. I need for you to give him a message," she continued, running her forefinger across the bartender's lip and slyly popping a couple of her fingers into his mouth, allowing him to suck them gently. "What should I tell him?" the bartender stammered. "Tell him," she whispered, "There's no toilet paper, hand soap, or paper towels in the ladies room."

Spanish Vignettes - The Cofradías

Easter is the main time for processions in Spain. These are Catholic processions, all very solemn, which are held in thousands of places throughout Spain, from the small towns to the big cities. It is the **Cofradía** or Brotherhoods - an association of lay Catholics - who organise and participate in the processions, usually dressed in elaborate costumes or uniforms carrying and protecting elaborate and often ancient religious images and relics.

There are many types of these brotherhoods or guilds, Sevilla at one time having 426 Cofradías; but the three main ones these days are

- *Penitenciales*, (Penitential) who march in Holy Week and are very distinctive because of the peaked hoods they wear. This fraternity dates back to the early 1400's.
- *De gloria*, (for the Glory) which was possibly founded in 1948.
- *Sacramentales*, (Sacramental) founded in 1514.

In the guilds there are different classes of members - stewards, counsellors, musicians, bearers, throne men, *priostes* (who maintain the images) etc. In principle, any Christian can be part of a brotherhood, simply by getting the signature of a brother who supports him. New members must perform an act called the *Rules of Jura*, in which the new brother kisses the Book of Rules and the Gospel and swears his Christian status, loyalty and service to the Brotherhood. The military are always well represented in the Cofradía processions with their attendance at 120 locations this Easter. For the first time ever, the Defence Minister, Carmé Chacón, has this year ordered that the military do not carry arms at the parades.



(Above: Hermandad Penitencial del Santísimo Cristo de Zalamea y María Santísima del Consuelo, Orihuela)



Because of a tradition which dates back several hundred years, a number of prisoners are released every year at the request of the brotherhoods. A total of 17 were pardoned this year. In Malaga, a 52-year-old father of two was pardoned from a three-year sentence for a public health offence (drug dealing). This tradition is believed to have started in 1759 when a cholera outbreak decimated the population and there were insufficient people to carry the statue in Holy Week. Some prisoners in the local jail broke out so that they could carry the statue and then returned voluntarily to the jail.

During the late 1,400's, Ferdinand and Isabella - the Catholic Kings - supported and encouraged the brotherhoods, who in turn acted as a local police force curbing bandit activity and the excesses of the nobles.

This year a group of atheists applied for permission to stage a march during Holy Week. They planned to carry banners which said '*Hermandad de la Santa Pedofilia*' (Brotherhood of the Saint Paedophile) and '*Cofradía del Papa del Santo Latrocinio*' (Brotherhood of the Pope of the Saint Robber). Wisely, the authorities banned this march as they felt that it was provocation to the million plus brotherhood members who were marching and who would undoubtedly send the atheists to meet their Maker - even if they didn't believe in one in the first place! One of the newspapers pointed out that the brotherhoods are five times larger in numbers than the PSOE Socialist Party. Perhaps they should think about going into politics.

The Dead Cow and Vet College

First-year students at the Edinburgh Veterinary College were receiving their first anatomy class with a real dead cow.

They all gathered around the surgery table with the body covered with a white sheet. The professor started the class by telling them, "In Veterinary Medicine it is necessary to have two important qualities as a doctor: The first is that you not be disgusted by anything involving the animal body." For an example, the Professor pulled back the sheet, stuck his finger in the butt of the dead cow, withdrew it and stuck his finger in his mouth.

"Go ahead and do the same thing," he told his students.

The students freaked out, hesitated for several minutes, but eventually took turns sticking a finger in the anal opening of the dead cow and sucking on it. When everyone finished, the Professor looked at them and said, "The second most important quality is observation. I stuck in my middle finger and sucked on my index finger. Now learn to pay attention. Life's tough, it's even tougher when you're stupid!"

Is it a bird.....?

One night, an 87-year-old woman came home from Bingo to find her 92-year-old husband in bed with another woman. She became violent and ended up pushing him off the balcony of their 20th floor apartment, killing him instantly.

Brought before the court, on the charge of murder, she was asked if she had anything to say in her own defence.

'Your Honour,' she began coolly, 'I figured that at 92, if he could screw, he could fly.'



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More madness from Málaga

Idiot of the Month Award

A man who ordered a pizza to be delivered to his home in Málaga could spend up to eight years in prison for holding up the woman who delivered it with a knife and stealing the pizza, plus the €35 she was carrying with her at the time.

This idiot now faces a charge of robbery with violence and intimidation, with an additional charge of illegal detention, because he allegedly held the woman there for at least 10 minutes, threatening to stab her, before he let her go. Police later found the knife and the pizza box in his home.

Ni Nis (pronounced 'knee knees')

Ni Nis is Spanish slang for a generation of young Spaniards, between the ages of 16 and 35, who neither work nor study but remain at home, 'sponging' off the parents and grandparents. The term comes from the expression "*Ni estudian Ni trabajan*" (They don't study. They don't work.) There are an estimated 700,000 *Ni Nis* in Spain and the number is growing steadily due to the high unemployment rate among the young.

A 25-year-old male *ni ni*, who lives with his parents in Málaga - who are also kindly making the payments on his car - took his parents to court demanding that they pay him €400 a month! This came after the parents refused to pay him any more money, which in turn led to arguments, insults and psychological mistreatment of the parents. The judge, in a Málaga Family Court, ruled against the 'youngster' and gave him 30 days to leave the family home. The judge considered that the man has sufficient ability to work, commenting that he even has some knowledge of the stock market. He said that it was not right to expect his parents to support his behaviour, BUT did order them to pay him 200 € a month for the next two years to help with his emancipation!! With this kind of attitude, this chap could do very well in that big self-serving seemingly bottom-less trough - Spanish politics.

I am sure that many of you will agree with me that the real motivation this guy needs is a hefty boot up the backside!

The 'shooters' from Cork

In late January last year a 54-year-old British man, Peter Christley, opened his front door in the Málaga town of Benalmádena and was shot several times. Fortunately the victim, who the authorities describe as 'being of police interest,' survived and 'spilt the beans' to the police.

It seems that the 'shooters,' both from Cork in Ireland, gave Christley €200,000 to launder. Christley failed to hand back the proceeds claiming that the money was stolen from him. He was given some time to return the money and failing to do so was allegedly shot by the two Irishmen. One of the Irish chaps was arrested in Fuengirola last week and his colleague was arrested in Montevideo, Uruguay, shortly afterwards. (I wonder if these guys would collect delinquent urbanisation fees?)

The Dancing Duck

A circus-owner walks into a pub to see everyone crowded around a table watching a little show. On the table is an upside-down pot, and a duck tap-dancing on it. The circus-owner is so impressed that he immediately offers to buy the duck and the pot. After some haggling, they settle for €5,000 for the duck and the pot.

Three days later the circus-owner comes back to the pub, furious. He goes up to the bloke he bought the duck from and says; 'Your duck is a bloody rip-off! I stuck him on the pot before a whole audience, and he didn't dance a single step!'

The bloke looks unimpressed.

'Well,' he asks, 'did you remember to light the candle under the pot?'

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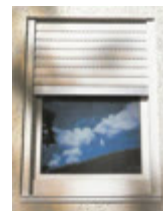
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The Big Wave

Tsunami is a Japanese word, but that does not mean to say that destructive tidal waves only happen in the Pacific. On All Saints' Day in 1755, Cádiz and Huelva on the Iberian Coast were hit by a devastating wave after an earthquake on an Atlantic fault line some 400 kilometers off the coast. Although far fewer people lived on the coast than today, it still claimed 1,240 lives. Scientists don't know whether history will repeat itself next year or in 500 years, but given the destructive power of this phenomenon, they are now calling for an early warning system.

The tremor is remembered as the Lisbon Earthquake because it destroyed the city and killed 12,000 people in Portugal. It measured around 8.4 on the Richter scale, according to a reconstruction by scientists, explains Emilio Carreño, head of the Seismic Network of the National Geographic Institute (IGN). "The quake was felt in Germany and nearly all the cathedrals with towers in the peninsula were damaged," added Carreño. The quake generated a tsunami. The cliffs of the Algarve were barely damaged but in the zone between Cádiz and Huelva, home to marshes below sea level, it made a huge impact. In Ayamonte (Huelva) alone, 400 drowned. In Cádiz, where waves measured up to 6.5 meters, the governor ordered the closure of the sea-wall gate, which helped save lives. The event generated so much alarm and surprise that it was well documented and archived.

Mauricio González, a researcher with Cantabria University's Oceanographic and Coastal Engineering Group and a tsunami expert, says the 1755 quake was not an isolated case. "Over 18 tsunami-generating quakes were registered between 300BC and 1900" in the Gulf of Cádiz. In the Mediterranean, tsunamis are less destructive but they can be dangerous for bathers, and low-lying zones in summer. Since the devastating tsunami in Indonesia in 2004, scientists began to study the phenomenon and how to predict it. A European project has now identified the possible sources of tsunamis and their effect. Since the Japan nuclear disaster, atomic power plants' resistance to quakes is also under review across Europe. In Spain, nuclear plants are situated outside any zones of high seismicity, and the force of the Lisbon 1755 quake was used in the location calculations. However, González explains, "there is still no early warning system. In Japan, the warnings meant only a fraction of the deaths seen in Indonesia." Paradoxically, "Unesco's detection system would enable Spain to find out about tsunamis, but it wouldn't know how to respond to an alert," he adds. González has modelled the alarming impact of a tsunami on Cádiz, now home to 125,000. "A great tsunami will hit the Spanish coast tomorrow or in 100 years." It's just a question of time.

The northwest coast of Tenerife was destroyed by at least two strong tsunami waves between 150,000 and 180,000 years ago. The waves reached 50 meters high and penetrated an area of several kilometres inland. The huge waves were not caused by earthquakes but were caused by landslides related to explosive eruptions, on volcanos similar to Mount Teide.

-The striker's concussed. He doesn't know who he is.

-Tell him he's Pelé and get him back on.

(John Lambie, Partick Thistle manager and trainer.)



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I'm not saying she talks a lot but her mouth was open so often last winter, we had to lag her tonsils.
 Les Dawson

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Clever Girl
 An older woman was doing her exercises in front of the mirror, admiring her figure when her husband asked, 'What are you looking at?'
 'I'll have you know my pilates instructor says I have the chest of a 23-year-old woman,' she replied.
 'Yeah?' said her husband, 'Well did he say anything about your 60-year-old arse?'
 'Why, no dear,' she said, 'we never talk about you.'

I told my kid about the birds and the bees. He told me about my wife and the butcher!
 Rodney Dangerfield



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Pedro was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up toward heaven, he said "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of my life and give up tequila."
 Miraculously, a parking place appeared. Pedro looked up again and said, "Never mind. I found one."

The Best Restaurants in the World

The British magazine 'Restaurant,' has just published the San Pellegrino Awards of the 50 Best Restaurants in the World. The Danish restaurant 'Noma' has won the top award for the second year running. They beat the Spanish restaurant 'El Bulli' (reviewed in a previous DS issue) last year, which is now closed until 2014. However, the Spanish have still managed to get three into the list at 2,3 and 8, which is admirable.

The top ten are:-

1. 'Noma' - René Redzepi, Copenhagen (Denmark)
2. 'El Celler de Can Roca' - Hermanos Roca, Girona (Spain)
3. 'Mugaritz' - Andoni Luis Adúriz, Rentería (Spain)
4. 'Osteria Francescana' - Francesco Bottura, Módena (Italy)
5. 'The fat duck' -Heston Blumenthal, Bray (G.B.)
6. 'Alinea' - Grant Achatz, Chicago (USA)
7. 'D.O.M.' - Alex Attala, Sao Paulo (Brazil)
8. 'Arzak' - Juan Mari Arzak, San Sebastián (Spain)
9. 'Le chateaubriand' - Iñaki Azpitarte, París (France)
10. 'Per se' - Thomas Keller, Nueva York (USA)

You can see a list of the top 50 restaurants at

<http://www.theworlds50best.com/awards/1-50-winners>

A Set Evening 7-course Menu at *Noma* is outlined below. This costs the equivalent of €145. If you would like the recommended wines with your meal, then double this amount. A 12 course menu of Noma's classics and new inventions with the best Nordic produce will set you back around €180.

The experience lasts more than 4 hours and must be ordered no later than 8 pm. (The experience of paying the bill will last you 'till the end of the month!)

Sample 7-course Menu

Sea urchin and dill
Cucumber and cream
Oyster and the ocean
Potatoes and milk skin
Lovage and yogurt
Pickled vegetables and bone marrow
Beef cheek and pear
Verbena and endive
"Gammel Dansk" and sorrel
Jerusalem artichoke and marjoram
Apple and malt

All I can say is that the presentation must be really something special!

HONEYMOON....

A young couple left the church and arrived at the hotel where they were spending the first night of their honeymoon. They opened the champagne and began undressing. When the bridegroom removed his socks, his new wife asked, "What's wrong with your feet? Your toes look all mangled and weird."

"I had tolie as a child," he answered. "You mean polio?" she asked.

"No, tolie . The disease only affected my toes."

When the groom took off his pants, his bride once again asked "What's wrong with your knees? They're all lumpy and deformed!" "As a child, I also had kneasles," he explained.

"You mean measles?" she asked. "No, kneasles. It was a strange illness that only affected my knees."

The new bride had to be satisfied with this answer.

As they continued undressing, her husband at last removed his underwear.

"Don't tell me," she said. "Let me guess... Smallcox!"

Like some chocolate with those sausages?

Among the stand-out attractions in Madrid at the annual 25th *Salón de Gourmets* in April, the main event in the Spanish premium food sector's calendar, was a range of products blending chocolate with such perennials as *morcilla* (blood sausage, typically filled with rice, pine kernels, apple or onion) and *cecina* (dry cured beef).

Castilla y León, the northern region where family firm Embutidos Cardeña has been satisfying local palates with this traditional black sausage since 1925, rightly considers itself the home of the *morcilla*. But the company isn't resting on its laurels, and in conjunction with Isabel Álvarez, who runs prize-winning restaurant La Fábula in the Castilian capital of Burgos, has come up with *morcilla nachos*. Gluten-free, these slivers of black sausage covered with a crispy rice coating aim, in the words of the company, "to satisfy both traditional and progressive palates." Among its other innovations is a pâté made from Ibérico ham, and for the really adventurous, a new twist on surf and turf in the form of a *morcilla*-stuffed squid, created by Saúl Gómez Carrillo of Burgos restaurant Blue Gallery.

Not to be outdone, Burgos *morcilla* maker Ríos has come up with its own range of gluten-free snacks, nibbles, and starters. "*Chococecina*" looks like an ordinary bar of dark chocolate until you bite into it to discover wafer-thin shavings of *cecina*. The concept is the fruit of a collaboration between two long-standing companies from the Astorga area of northern León: Confiterías El Arriero Maragato and Cecinas Pablo. The first bite is dominated by the bitterness of the dark chocolate, which softens to something a little sweeter, and culminates in a hint of *cecina*. "The *cecina* lingers in the aftertaste," says José Arévalo, who runs El Arriero Maragato, adding: "We wanted to innovate based on traditional flavors."

Family firm Melsa has been producing *longaniza*, a dry cured sausage similar to the French saucisson, since 1860 in the Huesca foothills of the Pyrenees. Like its competitors, it has decided to expand its range of products to reach a wider audience by making snacks and starters. Among its innovations are mini-sausages that can be cooked in the microwave and have been spiced up with truffles, aromatic herbs and different wild mushrooms.

The *Salón de Gourmets* attracts around 70,000 visitors each year, bringing together producers and consumers of high-end food products.

Tracy Day

- 12 (Congratulations to Dave Hope on the success of 'Little Piece of Home.' I have used his service on a number of occasions and found it to be reliable and great value, enabling me to get various items and reasonably priced printer consumables from the UK. Try him out, you won't be disappointed. Mick, Editor.)

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My wife asked me, "How many women have you slept with?"
I proudly replied, "Only you, Darling. With all the others I was awake."
I should be up and about in about 5 months! Pete Dudman

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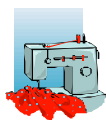
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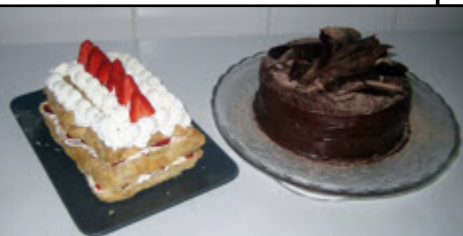
Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my shape to keep.
Please no wrinkles, please no bags
Please lift my bum before it sags.
Please no age spots, please no gray
As for my belly, please take it away.
Keep me healthy, keep me young,
And thank you Lord,
For all you've done.
(Wendy Jung)

One for the lads

A real woman is a man's best friend.
She will never stand him up & never let him down.
She will reassure him when he feels insecure & comfort him after a bad day.
She will inspire him to do things he never thought he could do, she will enable
him to express deepest emotions & give in to his most intimate desires.
She will make him feel confident & sexy, seductive & invincible.....
No wait... I'm thinking of Lager, of course, it's bloody Lager that does that.
Sorry!

I'm not saying my wife's a nervous type.....but she has to knock back two large
gins to calm her down so she can get the top off the tranquilliser bottle.

Les Dawson



*This time some of the delights from
Galadriel in Via Park V.
On top is a Strawberry Mille Feuille
With a Chocolate Gateaux
Then a Oreo Cookie Bash and
their famous Knickerbocker Glory.
Underneath, a Waffle Raft*

Local News

I am very sad to report that Richard Norris, formerly of Dream Hills, died suddenly on April 26. Richard, and his wife Marjorie, lived for several years in Dream Hills before moving to another urbanisation near Guardamar. Whilst here, they coordinated the activities in La Casita and also arranged the petanca activities. Our condolences to Marjorie and family. May he rest in peace.

The Annual General Meeting of Dream Hills is to be held at the Orihuela Costa Resort, in La Zenia on Friday May 13, 2011, at 4:30 pm in the first instance.

Dream Hills is looking very good at the moment. Congratulations to the President and Committee but also special thanks to all those who have been 'grafting' on their continuing garden activities in the old and new phases. Grateful thanks also to David the handyman who, more than anybody, keeps the urbanisation looking great. The job he also did in relaying the slabs around the top pool was excellent.

Aside from the usual niggles with some of the Spaniards (not all) for not picking-up their dog poo, the major problem the urbanisation faces, as do others, is the non payment of urbanisation fees which has now reached almost €60,000 in accumulated debt. This is not a figure to be 'hushed-away' in the files. It has to be seriously and methodically addressed if it is to be reduced. No action means no recovery! There are no laws or rules governing debt collection in Spain so one can afford to be very firm and creative yet fair, in chasing collections. When I see these debtors even renting their houses out, I have to wonder why our efforts to collect these bad debts are so passive.

I also believe it would be a good idea for the administrators to broaden the facilities that can be utilised for the payment of the annual urb fee. This is the 21st century and it should be possible to use payment methods such as PayPal, debit and credit cards etc to collect the annual fees.

Animal charities in Spain are always under pressure for funds particularly so in these difficult times. Fortunately, many in the various urbanisations around us devote great time and effort to help raise critically needed funds for the various animal charities. I was given a letter addressed to Jean and Val, from one such charity, The Association of Street Cats, thanking them, their friends and neighbours for all the goods they donate. Keep up the good work.

On Hol's

A travel agent looked up from his desk to see an old lady and an old gentleman peering in the shop window at the posters showing the glamorous Destinations around the world.

The agent had had a good month and the dejected couple looking in the window gave him a rare feeling of generosity. He called them into his shop: 'I know that on your pension you could never hope to have a decent holiday, so I am sending you both off to a fabulous resort at my expense, and I won't take no for an answer.' He took them inside and asked his secretary to write two flight tickets and book a room in a five star hotel. They, as can be expected, gladly accepted, and were off!

About a month later the little old lady came in to his shop. 'And how did you like your holiday?' he asked eagerly.

The flight was exciting and the room was lovely,' she said. 'I've come to thank you, but one thing puzzled me. Who was that old bugger I had to share the room with?'

ACTUALLY, SOME OF US ASK THE SAME QUESTION EVERY MORNING!!!

(Pete Dudman)

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I can't drink to that!

There are few celebrations and certainly no 'toasting' with their renowned sherry in the Jerez City Hall these days.

Their electricity has now been cut off, as a result of an unpaid bill. This has paralysed all activity at the City Hall. The collapse of their computer system now means that all activity has to be done by hand. The Socialist Mayor, Pilar Sánchez, has suspended the council meetings as it has proved impossible to record the meetings and decisions and send them through the computer system.

The *ayuntamiento* owes more than €3.1 million to the Endesa energy company for their electricity bill. The mayor has asked for 'more understanding' from the power company. Obviously a lot more 'understanding' is required as the public services are now grinding to a halt. The bus drivers went on strike in protest at not being paid for three months, and the 2,500 municipal workers have only just been paid for March.

Little Johnny

The teacher gathered her class of pre-school children together after a long and tiring day spent visiting a local farm.

'Now children,' she asks, 'can anyone tell me what sounds you heard today on the farm?'

The children held up their hands.

'What about you Katie?'

'Yes Miss, I heard a cow go moooooo.'

'And what did you hear Sammy?'

'Yes Miss, I heard a sheep go baaaaaa.'

'Very good and what about you little Johnny?'

'Yes Miss. I heard the farmer shout 'Get off that f****n tractor.'

La Casita



There are still people on the urbanisation who are not aware of the facilities available at the above La Casita.

La Casita was a gift to the urbanisation from the developers. It has become a wonderful asset to the community and we are very fortunate to have such a resource. I am not aware of any other urbanisation which has a similar facility.

The Casita is located between the swimming pools next to the children's play area. It hosts a number of activities and there is a helpful noticeboard outside.

There is an art group at the Casita every Monday morning. On Monday evenings there is a Kalooki (card game) session. Then on Wednesday evenings there is another card game session, Rummikub.

On Thursday mornings there is the Book Swap between 10 am and midday. Bring a book and swap it for another. Bring six and swap six! There are thousands of book in La Casita and you are bound to find something to interest you. On Thursday evenings there is a Fund Darts session. Bring your 'arrows' and your drink of choice and have some fun!

On Friday mornings between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm, there is a coffee morning. If you are new to the urbanisation or would just like to meet new friends, this is an excellent opportunity to meet others and to get some answers from the 'locals.'

Spanish language classes are also held at the Casita on Wednesdays and Thursdays, a beginners class being held on Tuesdays.

If you have an interest in any of the above, then check out the contact details on the noticeboard on the front of the Casita. It sure beats sitting at home watching the 'soaps' or 'Dancing on my xxxxxx nerves.'

There have been attempts in the past to hold exercise classes such as Pilates etc, at La Casita, but these folded due to lack of support.

If you have any sensible ideas concerning new activities you might like to see there, then contact either Peter or Jackie, the La Casita coordinators, on 966189065.

Petanca players also meet to play on the nearby courts twice a week, on Mondays at 3 pm and on Thursdays at 11 am. Why not pop along. The Petanca group are having their annual competition on Saturday the 14th May at 11am, followed by a meal at Galadriels in the evening.



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Blond Cowboy

A Sheriff in a small town in Texas walks out in the street and sees a blond haired cowboy coming toward him with nothing on but his cowboy hat, his gun and his boots. He arrests him for indecent exposure. As he is locking him up, he asks 'Why in the world are you walking around like this?'

The cowboy says, 'Well it's like this SheriffI was in this bar down the road and this pretty little red head asks me to go out to her motor home with her. So I did.

We go inside and she pulls off her top and asks me to pull off my shirt... So I did.

Then she pulls off her skirt and asks me to pull off my pants... So I did. Then she pulls off her panties and asks me to pull off my shorts....so I did.

Then she gets on the bed and looks at me kind of sexy and says, 'Now go to town cowboy.'

'And here I am.'

Son of a Gun. Blonde Men do exist (Pete Dudman)

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Countries

There are many non-intellectual countries; Australia is one of the few anti-intellectual ones. George Mikes

France: ever want to slap an entire country? Steve Landesberg

The Middle Eastern states aren't nations, they're quarrels with borders. P.J. O'Rourke

Growing up in Wales is tough. It's always wet. I was eight before I realised you could take a cagoule off. Rhod Gilbert

We find evidence of the Mediterranean diet in Scotland - albeit in the form of deep-fried pizza.

Dr. M.P. Medical Research Council.

What's the matter, Ozzy? You haven't looked this depressed since you remembered you were from Birmingham. Sharon Osbourne

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The editor, Mick, can be contacted at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com or at 586 Dream Hills.

For Sale: Ringway electric piano, 6 octaves with 8 different musical voices, together with stool.

€120 O.N.O. Tel: 966 722 084

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www.golflinksspain.com The best online golf magazine.

Do you enjoy walking?

If you do, then visit the website www.topwalks.net/en/index.htm

The **chemists/pharmacists** in Los Balcones are now open seven days a week, **365 days** a year from 9am to 9pm.

-The police came to my front door last night holding a picture of my wife. They said, "Is this your wife, sir?"

Shocked, I answered, " Yes."

They said, "I'm afraid it looks like she's been hit by a bus."

I said, "I know, but she has a lovely personality."

-Firemen have just rescued an Irish man with his todger stuck in a condom machine. When asked what happened he said, "The sign says, 'Insert £2 and push knob in.'"

Not every flower can say love, but a rose can.

Not every flower can survive thirst, but a cactus can.

Not every vegetable can read, but bless, look at you having a little go!

-Peter Fraser

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Your contribution towards costs helps us to continue this newsletter. Contact Mick at no. 586 Dream Hills or at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com

Costa Blanca SAMARITANS
902 88 35 35

Diabetic?

A support group meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 11am at Hoggies Bar in San Luis.

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