

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 52 1st of June 2011

Bienvenido a todos.

Now that summer has arrived it is great to see old friends come back and see lots of happy children about the area. Except for a few bad days, the weather has been excellent save for some very high humidity. Easterly winds has been keeping the temperatures from drifting up into the 30's.

There have been regional and municipal elections throughout Spain. Nationally, the Socialists, PSOE, got a hammering, their lowest vote since the post-Franco democracy, the PP (Peoples' Party - right of centre) did particularly well, gaining majorities in what were normally Socialist strongholds. In the local elections in Torrevieja, the ruling PP increased their majority. However in the municipality of Orihuela, the PP lost the majority they had for the last 24 years. (Incidentally the PP were the only party who had no non-Spanish Europeans on their selection list, despite instructions from the regional government to include them.) Both the PP and the PSOE lost seats, which the Centro Liberal/CLARO alliance gained at their expense.

The council now has 12 PP councillors while the opposition parties councillors muster 13. So the ruling council for the district of Orihuela for the next four years could comprise a coalition of six Socialists, three Greens, three Liberal Centre and one British expat councillor. Now what could go wrong with that?

Dream Hills (1) also had its AGM in May. The annual urbanisation charge for a villa/house for the next 12 month is €200.32 and for an apartment/bungalow it is €150.24 or €133.55 depending on the size. With all utility costs rising this is an excellent result. The fees are payable on the first of June with a 1.5% per month surcharge for any late payers after July 15. The urbanisation is looking good and the pools and pool areas are looking very inviting even if the water is still freezing! There are still some brave souls taking early morning dips!

Orihuela Costa now hold a record eight Blue Flags. They are at Playa Flamenca, Cala Capitan, Cabo Roig, Cam-pomor, Barranco Rubio, Punta Prima and La Zenia. These last two are additions. The eighth Blue Flag is the Marina at Cabo Roig. I believe Mil Palmeras may have lost theirs.

Note: The CAM cash machine (ATM) at the Punta Marina shopping complex in Punta Prima has been removed.

Dave the handyman wishes to remind owners that waste and sewage oozing from drains onto the pavements is the householder's responsibility not the urbanisation's.

I am sorry to report that Pete Dudman, one of our main jokes contributors, suffered a stroke last month. Pete is however back home now and is doing well. We all wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him in September.

A big thanks to Lillias and Mike Duncan for their generous donation towards costs.

Another mixed bag this month, the history article is back together with another great article by Pat Cartwright.

Wishing you all the best and hoping we will see you soon. Mick & Tid

'If life were fair, Elvis would be alive and all the impersonators would be dead.' Johnny Carson

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Angela's Cartoon



'It's your ball, you get it!'

What's Up?

Aside from the local and regional elections, the two big national stories last month were the earthquake in Lorca and the savage murder and beheading of a 60-year-old British lady in Los Cristianos, Tenerife. Both incidents have been reported on in detail in the international press.

The owners of properties, mainly apartments, which have been destroyed in the earthquake will receive €106,000 from the state, and those whose homes were damaged will get €24,000. People can also claim €6,671 a year for rent, for a two year period. This is in addition to any insurance payouts. In the week following the main quake, Lorca experienced 113 aftershocks.

The tragedy of the latter story is compounded by the fact that it now appears that she had reported the threatening behaviour of her attacker to a security guard just minutes before the fatal attack. She told Social Services officials in an office just before the attack that she was being followed, and then she stayed in their office until she thought the man had gone. She then went into the nearby Chinese supermarket, but her attacker was still outside and followed her in.

A mass demonstration has been held in the centre of Madrid by 'The Indignant' - a group of largely teens to thirties - which has lasted a couple of weeks. Among their demands are a change in the electoral law, overturning of the political parties law, and increase in taxes, improving secular education and doing away with the monarchy.

Iberia pilots have authorised their union SEPLA to call a strike before the summer 'if it proves necessary', without the need for any further assembly. The pilots are angry about the disciplinary action being taken against pilots regarding rest and work times.

The OECD has revealed that they do not expect Spain to reach the unemployment levels pre-crisis until 2026.

You may recall that I mentioned in the May issue that Telefónica are to cut their staff by 20% over the next three years, meaning that a crap customer service will soon be even crappier! They have now just announced that they are to increase their sackings from 5,800 to 8,000 over the next five years, no doubt filling existing Telefónica users full of confidence. Telefónica España have also announced a complete restructuring of the company. It is to be split into two halves - Grand Public and Companies and will have five territorial branches, breaking up the current centralised approach into - Centre, Cataluña, East, South and North. The objective is, apparently, to 'bring the company closer to the client.' Having worked for a large company in the past, I am generally sceptical of regular reorganisations in large firms. The following quote I believe sums it up, 'We are engaging in tough training, but each time when new communities were emerging we were re-organised. Later in my life I understood that we incline to encounter new situations with re-organisation: and this would be a brilliant method to create the illusion of progress while it is producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.' The writer? Attributed to Petronius Arbitr, (circa 210 BC or later).

The Government will have to fund early retirement payments and sackings from the country's savings banks to the tune of 700 million €. The taxpayer will pay 54,000 € for each employee who leaves his or her post. As part of the restructuring of the sector 45 savings banks in Spain will end up in 18 financial groups.

One in every five loans in Spain is now a bad debt. During the first quarter of this years, loans approved are down almost 6% on the same quarter last year. Barclays España has the largest bad debt in real estate, with the percentage of their doubtful credits in this sector running at 58%, more than any of the savings banks. Barclays also want to purchase a savings bank in Spain. Nationally, one in four companies who applied for loans in 2010 were unsuccessful and only half of all applications were successfully financed. The banks blame insufficient guarantees.

Many banks are rushing to clear their books of some of the properties they have seized so far in the crisis. Some banks such as Banco Santander, BBVA and Caja Madrid are offering mortgages for 100% of home value for 40 years, which means the same terms are being offered as before the outbreak of the crisis. However mortgages in Spain are continuing to free-fall and were down 20% in March. It was a far greater fall in March in annual terms than that seen in the two previous months - January 7.9% and February 8.8%, and it represents the 11th consecutive monthly fall. Savings banks, cajas, awarded slightly more credit and offered slightly lower rates to their customers.

Most Spanish directors admit that bribes and corruption are common in business here, according to the 'European Fraud Survey 2011' study from Ernst & Young. 42% said they thought that corruption had increased. The report has shown that 30% of Spanish directors consider that back-handers and the paying of bribes is acceptable. The number compares to a European average of 19%.

Irish low-cost airline Ryanair has threatened the Spanish Government with reducing their routes and people employed by them in Spain unless 65 fines issued against them are withdrawn. The CEO of the airline, Michael O'Leary, has called on the Ministry for Industry to remove the fines which total €1.23 million€.

The US naval carrier, the USS Enterprise no less, will be docking at Cartagena for a six-day stopover. An impressive sight in the harbour. Now Mother, that's 6,000 sailors on the loose. Probably best to lock-up your daughters, and seeing it's the navy maybe your sons as well!

The now outgoing socialist president of the Junta de Extremadura had four official cars costing €200,000. Extremadura is one of the poorest regions of Spain.

Cigarette sales in Spain for the first quarter this year were down 23.5%. Despite a hefty increase in tobacco taxation, the government took €150 million less in tobacco tax in the same quarter. Many of the manufacturers have reduced prices - Marlboro is now €4 a pack with Chesterfield and L&M down by 20 and 30 cents.

The Gift

God spoke to Adam. 'Adam, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that I will give you two organs to give you great power and pleasure. I will give you a brain to enable you to think and to control the world. And I will give you a penis to give great pleasure in lovemaking.' 'Sounds great, God!' said Adam. 'But what's the bad news?' 'You only have enough blood to work one at a time.'

Truancy is a big problem in Spain. The problem is so serious in the Costa de la Luz town of La Línea, the local council has issued 84 fines to parents. Some schoolchildren have been absent for three months! However the fines are set at €150 (or voluntary community service) which is hardly much of a deterrent.

Jet2.com has announced a new direct service between Edinburgh and Alicante's El Altet Airport for summer 2012, starting on March 29 next year and departing four times weekly. It will be in operation until November 2012.

A drunk driver has been acquitted in Spain because of the skill in which he fled from the police! It happened in Murcia on April 8 where the driver avoided an alcohol control, driving off, jumping red lights, and skidding on the curves but he did so 'driving skilfully at speed'. When he was finally caught he gave a level of 0.45 grams of alcohol per litre of blood. The legal level in Spain is 0.25 grams, and above 0.60 grams is considered a crime. The magistrates in the Murcia Provincial Court have overturned an earlier sentence from the Penal Court 1 in Murcia, which had been for a year's driving ban, a 1,080 € fine, and 33 days community work. The judges in the higher court considered that the sentence was 'absurd' because it makes no sense that if he was that drunk, how was he capable of controlling a vehicle at great speed and even making handbrake turns?

Police in Alicante arrested a middle aged woman in early May after she allegedly stabbed a 41 year old man from Eastern Europe, apparently over a debt of €500. While the emergency services were carrying out their work, the woman came down to the doorway of the apartments and asked for her knife back saying she wanted to peel an onion. Witnesses and neighbours said she was obviously drunk. She was then arrested and taken for questioning by the police. She is claiming that the man stabbed himself, but reports say the police think that somewhat unlikely.

Soria, in the north central part of Spain, is one of the least populated provinces, not only of Spain but of the European Union as well. Soria has around 183 municipalities, half of which are hamlets that have just under 100 inhabitants and only 12 towns have a population exceeding a little over 1000. So imagine the surprise of a couple of Guardia Civil - who normally spend their day counting the leaves falling off the trees - when a car zoomed past them at 207 km/hr. The car, it has now been revealed, was being driven by the head of the Guardia Civil traffic authority in the province. The offending driver, Snr. Argüelo, said he was 'in pursuit' at the time but the two Guardias said there was no other car and his siren was not on. If found guilty, Snr. Argüelo faces up to six months in jail and a driving ban of between one to four years. I hope the two Guardias enjoy their new postings to one of the Spanish enclaves in northern Africa.

The Spanish copyright and performing rights organisation, SGAE, have had a dreadful reputation for several years. Wikileaks reported that the US embassy in Madrid described them as 'aggressive.' There are lots of anecdotal stories, my favourite being when they charged a hotel €3,500 for playing recorded music at a wedding! Last year, in what the press described as a 'popular' move, hackers crashed the SGAE website in protest at their heavy-handedness. The organisation promised to be more open early this year, and now, surprise, surprise, one of their projects in Sevilla has revealed a black hole €7.5 million.

The Guardia Civil can now get a bonus of €200 extra every month if they achieve certain productivity standards. The Guardias will get two points for attending a road accident, five if they make an arrest and nine points if they arrest someone driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

An Almería youngster who was the victim of a robbery when he was assaulted by three youths on a street in the city centre last month has had the stolen items returned after using the Internet to identify his three assailants. The 14 year old knew his attackers by sight, but had no idea of their names or where they lived. He trawled social network sites on the web until he managed to identify two of the thieves and passed the information onto police. All three have now been arrested and police have recovered and returned the 14 year old's stolen bling.

A man has been thrown out of a church in Spain for criticising the sermon. It happened in the Madrid village of Villanueva del Pardillo when the practicing Catholic and university professor in La Coruña, Primitivo González López, could not believe his ears during a mass. When the priest, Enrique Olmo, said as part of his sermon - 'This Government kills children in their mothers' bellies, and that is more Nazi than the Nazis in Germany', it was too much for the professor. He got up and shouted 'We are in mass, not a political rally.' Four other churchgoers then jumped on him and threw him out of the church. Other churchgoers later claimed that the priest also claimed during the sermon that the Minister for Health, Leire Pajín, 'kills old people with her death law and lethal injections.' Maybe a nice cup of tea and lovely padded cell for the Father?

The bomb squad were called to the sleepy village of Finestrat near Benidorm by the locals in mid-May. They were concerned when a large explosion rocked the area. After the area was cordoned off, it was revealed that a foreign-national building worker was tired of chipping away at a large rock in the rear of a commercial premises, so he decided to blow the rock up using gunpowder and fireworks! It has since emerged that not only did the builder not have a licence for the works but the explosion was on a property owned by someone else.

A group of 15 British tourists have been arrested in Valencia for causing a riot and damage to the fourth floor of an hotel in the city's maritime district. The 'piss-heads,' aged between 21 and 36, had only arrived that morning but had been drinking continuously since.

Danny Boy

'Dad,' said eight-year-old Danny, 'I'm gonna get married.'

Dad smiled indulgently. 'Who to, Son?'

'My girlfriend next door, she's eight too.'

'Found a place to live?'

'Well,' said Danny seriously, 'she gets two euros pocket money, and you give me two, so if she moves in with me, we can manage.'

Dad nodded. 'You might be able to get by on four euros a week now, but what will you do when the children start to arrive?'

'No worries,' said Danny confidently, 'we've been lucky so far.'

The Mozzie's Are Back! Some helpful tips from Tid.

Along with beautiful skies and rising temperatures, the dreaded mosquitos will shortly be making their presence felt. Last year, the aggressiveness of some strains required some to seek medical attention due to the severity of the reactions to their bites.

I can start by stating the obvious - use repellents, mosquito nets etc., and stay away from fir trees and stagnant pools of water. Mosquitos need water during their larvae stage to breed, as they hang just below the surface. I once worked in my student days in a malaria research laboratory where I inadvertently killed-off the researchers' complete strain of African mosquitos, by contaminating them with my hand cream! The cream formed an oily skin on the surface of the water, preventing them from breathing. Perhaps this is a solution to next door's abandoned swimming pool?

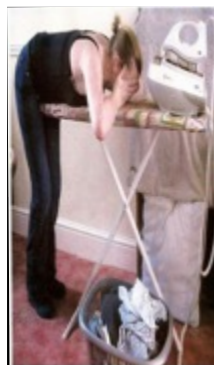
Over the years I have tried many 'weird and wonderful' repellents, among those the sonic repellent which is plugged into the mains, although humans can't hear it my dog went berserk! Then there are battery operated repellent devices. I read one review where it recommended people to take out the batteries and to throw them at the mosquitos! However, you may not have tried any of the following safe products which I have found have worked very well for me.

As a diabetic, my blood seems to act as a magnet to mosquitos. The first product I have found helpful is a pleasant lemon-scented cologne repellent called **HALLEY**, which you spray on as you would any cologne. (Don't forget the back of the knees and under your forearms.) I keep one in the bathroom for use first thing in the morning. I also keep a bottle on the front porch for popping out to get the washing-in or when watering the plants in the evenings. These are the times when it is not practical to stop and cover yourself with repellent. **HALLEY** comes in a 150 ml screw top bottle, so you can pour some of it into a mini-spray bottle (check the Chino's) for your handbag. The product is available from the *Farmacia* in Los Balcones and it is priced around €7. Two bottles will last a long time. It is non-sticky and blends well with your perfume or aftershave - or just used on its own.

It is inevitable that you will not get through the summer without some bites. My number two tip is really a 'life saver,' and it is called **ASPIVENIN**. This is a simple plastic mechanical suction device which is familiar to many survivalists, campers, hikers, etc. It is also supplied to the French army and is issued to all UNICEF workers. As you probably already know, the incredible itching and irritation caused by a mosquito bite is because the mozzie clears its proboscis by injecting its saliva into you so it can suck up your blood more easily without your blood clotting. **Aspivenin** comes in a little green box, which together with the suction plunger/syringe also contains nozzles of different sizes. You place the plunger with the appropriate nozzle over the bite and press the plunger which creates a vacuum on your skin. Leave in place for between 30 seconds and two minutes and you can see the poison being drawn out onto the skin's surface. One application is usually enough, but the action can be repeated if the irritation returns. I have found that this simple action relieves the itching immediately, leaving the bite to heal with no scarring. This little product can be safely used on children as well as adults. The product is also helpful in the case of bee stings, scorpion stings, snake bites etc **but emergency hospital treatment should always be sought immediately in the case of any serious bite.** You can find out more about this product by visiting www.flairpath.com; it costs £17.50 which includes the postage to Spain.

Tip number three relates to your skin-care, which is very important, especially with the strong sun we have here in Spain. After sun products are in abundance, but not so good for your clothes or furniture! Try using **ALOE GRISI**, an aloe vera gel, 99% pure, and non greasy with mildly antiseptic properties. This product does not contain alcohol and is very soothing, deeply penetrating the skin layers to promote healing of the damaged tissues, leaving no sticky residue. It is also useful for simple burns ie, iron, barbecue, cooker etc, also good for cuts and scratches, aiding quick healing. This can also be purchased in the local *Farmacia*. It costs around €10 for a 250 ml pump-operated bottle. It will last a long time as you do not need to use a lot of it. (The *Farmacia* may offer their own cheaper brand, but in my opinion it is not as good.) I have been using this product for years as a facial toner. It is great for pimples and wrinkles and can be used under make-up as a base as it is not sticky.

All the above are my personal recommendations and they have been tried and tested by me. Last year I had only three mosquito bites instead of the usual 30! And no! I don't have shares in these companies...but I wish I did!



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The Frog and Monkey

During a test of the rocket Ariane, a Frenchman is sent into orbit with a monkey. Each is given an envelope prior to launch. When they finally leave the Earth's atmosphere, the monkey opens his envelope and reads the instructions, 'Adjust trim, jettison fuel pods, check matter/anti-matter readings, correct course to 110 degrees and ease back on throttle controls.'

The Frenchman then reads *his* instructions: 'Feed the monkey.'

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The Marriage

A man met a beautiful blonde lady and decided he wanted to marry her right away.

She said, 'But we don't know anything about each other.'

He said, 'That's all right, we'll learn about each other as we go along.'

So she consented, they were married, and off they went on a honeymoon to a very nice resort.

One morning they were lying by the pool, when he got up off of his towel, climbed up to the 10 metre board and did a two and a half tuck, followed by three rotations in the pike position, at which point he straightened out and cut the water like a knife. After a few more breathtaking demonstrations, he came back and lay down on the towel.

She said, 'That was incredible!'

He said, 'I used to be an Olympic diving champion. You see, I

told you we'd learn more about each other as we went along.'

So she got up, jumped in the pool and started doing lengths.

After seventy-five lengths she climbed out of the pool, lay down on her towel and was hardly out of breath.

He said, 'That was incredible! Were you an Olympic endurance swimmer?'

'No,' she said, 'I was a prostitute in Liverpool but I worked both sides of the River Mersey!'

Drugs have taught an entire generation of English kids the metric system. P.J. O'Rourke

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Dream Hills Petanca Club

The Dream Hills Petanca Club had their annual knockout competition on Saturday, May 14.

This year a perpetual trophy was introduced to commemorate the memory of Richard Norris. It was a beautiful morning with 29 players competing for the new Richard Norris Trophy. After an exciting play-off, the trophy was won by Margaret Farnaby (See photo). Second place went to Martin Meredith and Third place to Freda Hollingsbee.



In the evening, everyone enjoyed a delightful meal at Galadriel's.

I took some photos of the competition and the celebration dinner and will put them on the web album in due course.



PHOENIX GOLF SOCIETY

The society travelled to Roda on a beautiful day for golf with a few guests and then back to the Phoenix Bar for the presentations.

Overall winner of the John Gillshaw Trophy was Richard Hirst who has only just finished talking about his eagle on the last outing.

The Gold Category went to Mike Carroll with Graham Mitchell taking the Silver.

Captain Dave Wightman won the Bronze Category but I think he is the only one in it.

The 'best guest' was Mark Shakespeare with Rob Hughes, Terry Dunn and my playing partner Mick Slater all winning their matchplay. One day I will mention myselfwhen pigs can fly?

Nearest the pins.....

No. 2 Mick Slater

No. 7 Mike Carroll

No. 11 Mark Shakespeare &

No. 15 Patrick Feeney

The winning pairs were Richard Hirst and Mick Slater.

The 'Must Try Harder' award was taken by Paul Green, a relief for Jim Waddell and myself.

The Phoenix Society play on the second Sunday of the month, details to be found in the bar. Thanks as always to Donna for the buffet.

John Bradbeer.

She's a bit sharp!

Did you hear about the blonde who swallowed one of the new Gillette razor blades?

She gave herself a tonsillectomy, an appendectomy, a hysterectomy – circumcised her husband – gave the vicar a hair lip – cut the end off the finger of a casual acquaintance – and it was still good for five shaves.

Dignified Death Legislation

The Government approved plans for the Law for a Dignified Death in the Friday cabinet meeting.

The legislation intends to respond to and reduce the pain suffered by those who are terminally ill, and wants to establish and equip palliative care centres across the country. It considers palliative care as a right, not a privilege and institutions will be obliged to supply patients with treatment in their last moments to avoid unnecessary suffering.

The legislation provides for the introduction of a Living Will declaration and will regulate the rights of the person during his or her death, as well as the responsibilities of health professionals. The legislation now goes to the consultative bodies of the Inter-territorial Health Council, so that its introduction can be standardised across all the regions, and then it will go for debate in Congress. Similar legislation is already in place in Andalucía and Aragón.

Dependency Law Fiascos

The lack of progress and decisions relating to the Dependency Law in Valencia led to 1,500 complaints last year, three times more than the previous year.

I have commented before on the wit-less and half-hearted implementation of this law throughout the regions but events in the north east only confirms my jaundiced view. Here the Catalan welfare and family councillor, Josep Lluís Cleries, said that he has found some missing 30,000 dependency care applications in 33 boxes in his department. The papers correspond to 29,271 Catalans who asked for dependency help between 2007 and 2009. He has informed the Catalan Parliament about his discovery.

69-year-old labourer!

A 69 year old woman with osteoarthritis and back problems has been put to work as a builder's assistant for the Almería provincial government, the Diputación Provincial. El Mundo newspaper reported that the woman was receiving unemployment benefit under the farm workers' subsidy and decided to accept the job for fear of losing her benefits. She also needs another year's social security payments to receive her pension.

She started work early one Friday morning last month, demolishing a wall, but, due to the pains in her hands, was unable to continue working with the pick she was given for the job.

The 69 year old had been matched up for the vacancy by the SAE employment service in Andalucía, and it's understood that some idiot in the Diputación have said that there is nothing they can do once the SAE has sent them a candidate who meets their requirements. Unbelievable! The Junta de Andalucía's employment chief for Almería province, Francisca Pérez Laborda, has admitted that it could have been an error on SAE's part and said she would take steps to resolve the situation if that proves to be the case.

So there you are Gladys! Throw away that zimmer-frame - they need someone to dig a new runway at Corvera Airport!



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If the First World War was a bar fight.....

Germany, Austria and Italy are standing together in the middle of a pub when Serbia bumps into Austria and spills Austria's pint. Austria demands Serbia buy it a complete new suit because there are splashes on its trouser leg. Germany expresses its support for Austria's point of view. Britain recommends that everyone calm down a bit.

Serbia points out that it can't afford a whole suit, but offers to pay for the cleaning of Austria's trousers. Russia and Serbia look at Austria. Austria asks Serbia who it's looking at. Russia suggests that Austria should leave its little brother alone.

Austria inquires as to whose army will assist Russia in compelling it to do so. Germany appeals to Britain that France has been looking at it, and that this is sufficiently out of order and that Britain should not intervene. Britain replies that France can look at who it wants to, that Britain is looking at Germany too, and what is Germany going to do about it? Germany tells Russia to stop looking at Austria, or Germany will render Russia incapable of looking at anybody.

Britain and France ask Germany whether it's looking at Belgium. Turkey and Germany go off into a corner and whisper. When they come back, Turkey makes a show of not looking at anyone. Germany rolls up its sleeves, looks at France, and punches Belgium.

France and Britain punch Germany. Austria punches Russia.

Germany punches Britain and France with one hand and Russia with the other.

Russia throws a punch at Germany, but misses and nearly falls over.

Japan calls over from the other side of the room that it's on Britain's side, but stays over there.

Italy surprises everyone by punching Austria.

Australia punches Turkey, and gets punched back. There are no hard feelings because Britain made Australia do it.

France gets thrown through a plate glass window, but gets back up and carries on fighting.

Russia gets thrown through another one, gets knocked out, suffers brain damage, and wakes up wearing red, with a complete personality change.

Italy throws a punch at Austria and misses, but Austria falls over anyway. Italy raises both fists in the air and runs round the room chanting.

America waits till Germany is about to fall-over from sustained punching from Britain and France, then walks over and smashes it with a barstool and then pretends it won the fight all by itself.

By now all the chairs and tables are broken and the big mirror over the bar is shattered. Britain, France and America agree that Germany threw the first punch, so the whole thing was Germany's fault. While Germany is still unconscious, they kick it in the 'family jewels,' go through its pockets, steal its wallet, and buy drinks for all their friends.

Pray for Mulrunji

A preacher said, "Anyone with 'special needs' who wants to be prayed over, please come forward to the front by the altar."

With that, an Aboriginal man got in line, and when it was his turn, the Preacher asked, "Mulrunji, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

Mulrunji replied, "Preacher, I need you to pray for help with me hearing."

The preacher put one finger of one hand in Mulrunji's ear, placed his other hand on top of Mulrunji's head, and then prayed and prayed and prayed.

He prayed to the 'Almighty' for Mulrunji, and the whole congregation joined in with great enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Mulrunji, how is your hearing now?"

Mulrunji answered, "I don't know. It ain't 'til next week!" (Pat Chambers)

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Gruesome or Awesome?

A young lassie asks an ageing Scotsman
 'What exactly is under your kilt?'

'Why don't you take a look?' he says.

'Och,' she shrieks, 'it's gruesome!'

'Aye lassie,' he replies, 'and if you stay a few moments it'll grue some more!'

VALENCIA – a taste of authentic Spain! By Pat Cartwright

Valencia is the third city of Spain, just over 225km north east of Torrevieja and easily accessible by car from Dream Hills. Using the AP7 toll motorway, the drive takes about 2 and a half hours. It is a lovely coastal route and it seems a shame not to stop en route for a leisurely lunch or a picnic. We have had good fodder in beach side restaurants in Calpe and Albir. If Benidorm is your cup of tea (too busy for me), you can certainly get a decent PG tips there! Further north of course there is Javea, Denia, Oliva and Gandia. We haven't explored them but we're told they are also worth a visit. In spite of being Spain's third city, the *centro historico* is compact, very picturesque mostly flat and easily walkable. The Turia gardens, through the centre of the town, were created from the old river bed when the Turia river was diverted in the 1960s, after severe flooding. It provides a delightful walk below the city walls with ponds, a fountain and sports fields. We saw green parakeets flying wild when we were there – very exotic!

The gothic cathedral contains what legend claims is the Holy Grail, the chalice used by Christ at the Last Supper. This may or may not be the real thing but it is nevertheless a beautiful brown agate cup, detailed in gold, pearls and precious gems. For the mountain goats among you it is possible to climb up to the top of the "*Miguelite*" bell tower (so called as it was blessed on St. Michael's day in 1418), which is about 58 metres high. From here there are fantastic views across the city and out to the coast.

The imposing *Torres de Serranos* is another landmark of Valencia. One of the two remaining city gates, it dates from 1394 and although it was built for defence, it was mainly used as a flamboyant trade gate for merchants entering the city. From 1586 to 1887 it was used as a prison for the nobility much like the Tower of London. For this reason it survived the demolition of rest of the city walls in 1865.

The old quarter is best explored on foot along the old tiny winding streets of the city's old Moorish past. They are full of restaurants, bars, cafés and ice-cream parlours. If you prefer to travel in style you can hire a horse and carriage in *Plaza de la Reina*. The indoor central market, which is one of the largest and most beautiful markets in Spain, is a masterpiece of modernist architecture, covered with ceramics and colourful stained glass windows. Mountains of fresh produce are perfectly stacked on more than 1,000 stalls. Inside and out are little tapas bars selling delicious fresh food and stalls selling paella pans and a selection of earthenware.

In complete contrast to the old city is the ultra modern City of Arts and Sciences situated at the coastal end of the Turia Gardens. There is a huge variety of top attractions here, including the *L'Oceanografic*, which houses the largest aquarium of marine life in Europe. Walk along the lovely *Umbracle* (shaded walkway) to the Science Museum which is spread over three floors and *L'Hemisferic* which contains an IMAX cinema and planetarium. The *Palau de les Artes* and the *Palau de la Música* are between the Turia gardens and the Science Park. The opera house is famed for its modern acoustic technology and has open-air auditoriums for theatre, opera and concerts.

The beautiful white sandy beaches of *Las Arenas* and *La Malvarrosa* lie about 3km to the east of the city. When we were there (admittedly in February), they were deserted. Parking was easy, all along the promenade and there looked to be some rather swish hotels. No doubt these get full with the sailing fraternity as a brand new harbour with state-of-the-art marinas and viewing capacity for over a million spectators were built when Valencia hosted the 2007 and 2009 America's cup.

We've stayed twice in Valencia, each time in hotels in the old city. Online booking sites such as www.booking.com, www.hotels.com and www.lastminute.com (and there are plenty more such sites) will offer rooms at all prices in all areas. Doing a quick search in May 2011 I found accommodation from 23 euros per room per night for a 2 star hotel to 100 euros at 4 star hotels. Bargains can be had on these sites and I found a double room including tax and breakfast for 99 euros at the 5 star Valencia Palace hotel opposite the *Palau de Musica*.

If you have time it's well worth a day trip out to El Palmar on Lake Albufera, 20 km south of the city. Valencia Tourism has a sightseeing bus that goes to El Palmar. The cost (quoted for 2011) is 8€ and includes a boat ride on the lake. The standard bus is apparently much cheaper and gives you a lot more freedom. El Palmar is the home of paella. It is made with locally grown rice and is probably as good as you're going to get anywhere, though it will be a little on the expensive side. In typical Cartwright style, we saved our cash and had a picnic!

If you fancy a change for the route home it's worth considering driving back inland on the A7 stopping on the way at Xativa. The town is about a 40 minute drive (62 km) from Valencia. The modern town has developed in the valley but as you approach you are immediately met with the magnificent medieval castle high on the hill above the town. The town itself has charming tree lined streets providing a natural canopy from the heat where you can enjoy a coffee, beer and some tapas in the cafes and bars. The castle itself was originally a Roman fortress and later a Moorish stronghold until eventually being taken by the Catholic Kings. The castle is open every day except Monday. There is a small entrance fee of 2 euros per person when we visited but of course this may have risen since then. Valencia is a beautiful Mediterranean city and very much a taste of "real Spain". Being so close to Torrevieja and with such good road connections, it seems a shame to miss it.

Hasta Luego! Adrian and Pat Cartwright 585 DH

A tourist in New Mexico comes across an old Native American couple sitting on a rug. The tourist says hello and asks what their names are. 'My name is White Cloud,' says the old man. 'This is my wife. Her name is Three Horses.' 'Three Horses?' says the tourist. 'Is that because her father saw three horses soon after she was born?' 'No,' says the old man. 'She's called that because all she does is nag, nag, nag.'



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An old lady totters into a sex shop and asks, "Do you sell things called 'vibrators'?"

"Of course we do," said the shop-owner, "They're all displayed on the shelving over there."

The old lady peers at the weird and wonderful sex-toys on display and then asks, "Can I have the big, red one?"

"No," replies the owner.

"That's the fire extinguisher."

Mary and Patrick are Catholics who practise the 'stool and saucer method of contraception. Patrick (5'10") makes love to Mary (6'4") upright, while standing on a stool. When Patrick's eyes get as big as saucers, Mary kicks away the stool.

Watch out for.....

The German health authorities warned last week that an aggressive strain of E.coli has now caused 14 deaths and made more than 1,000 ill in Germany. The bacteria, which is resistant to most antibiotics, has been discovered in cucumbers imported from Spain. The German public, particularly in the north of the country, have been advised not to eat any veggies, especially tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce, without cooking them first. The sources in Spain have been identified as Almeria and Malaga where the produce was for export only. The Spanish suppliers have countered by saying that the load was badly handled in Hamburg, Germany on May 16, when the cucumbers fell onto the ground. No matter where you live, it is always sensible to wash your fruit and veg. Austria has now banned supplies of tomatoes, cucumbers and aubergines from two large suppliers in Andalusia.

Many of you will have seen the adverts in the local newspapers and on TV concerning the companies who will purchase your gold and jewellery at the 'best prices.' A recent survey has shown that the price offered by these 'dealers' varies significantly. The price offered varied from 38% and up to 64% for 24 carat gold. FACUA, the Spanish consumer association, advises sellers to weigh the gold beforehand and compare prices. The current average price for a gram of 24 carat gold is €27.91 they advise.

The high price of gold has given the police in many countries a major headache as it has led to an increase in thefts, specifically targeting gold jewellery. Stolen gold jewellery can be sold relatively easily at these 'exchanges' which move to different locations regularly. Gold has always brought out the worst in people. I can recall a family of tinkers in Herefordshire who used to dig-up pet cemeteries and steal the jewellery off the dead animals. In April, the police in Elche arrested a man for desecrating a grave at the El Altet cemetery. The real 'kicker' is that the man had robbed his own brother's grave for the gold jewellery which was buried with the deceased's remains 10 years ago. The police found the jewellery in the thief's home.

Bicycle thieves are still around and a number have been stolen from Dream Hills. In one case they climbed over padlocked gates and cut the anti-theft cable on the bike.

On the other hand...

A university teacher reminds her class of tomorrow's final exam. 'Now class, I won't tolerate any excuses for you not being here tomorrow. I might consider a nuclear attack or a serious personal injury, illness, or a death in your immediate family, but that's it, no other excuses whatsoever!'

A smart-arse student in the back of the room raised his hand and asked, 'What would you say if tomorrow I said I was suffering from complete and utter sexual exhaustion?' The entire class is reduced to laughter and snickering. When silence was restored, the teacher smiled knowingly at the student, shook her head and sweetly said, 'Well, I guess you'd have to write the exam with your other hand.'



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What's Happening?

New bus service - Torrevieja - El Altet Airport, Alicante.

The direct bus service between Torrevieja's bus station and Alicante's El Altet airport has already commenced, although during first few days the service were remarkably quiet.

The service will operate 365 days a year, with eight round-trips per day between September and June and ten per day in July and August. The schedule starts at 7am, with the last service at 10pm. The route the bus will take will not be the busy N332 but the AP-7 motorway with the 63km trip lasting about an hour. These schedules may be altered in time.

Pickup times at bus station:

Torrevieja to Airport: 7:00, 9:00, 11:00, 13:00, 15:00, 17:00, 19:00, 21:00

Airport to Torrevieja: 8:00, 10:00, 12:00, 14:00, 16:00, 18:00, 20:00, 22:00

The bus being used is specially equipped for transporting baggage and is also reportedly accessible for people with mobility problems. Tickets can be purchased on the plane and on the net at €6.79 each. Here are special rates for pensioners and large families. The online address for ordering tickets has not been announced yet, but the Torrevieja.com sight lists the number **96 571 01 46**.

Summer Fete in La Zenia

Next Saturday, 4th June, there will be a large Summer Fete in La Zenia in Orihuela Costa. The grand charity event is supporting the Royal British Legion and the Alzheimer's Association. Starting in the Consum car park in La Zenia at 12:00, members of the Royal British Legion and the various armed forces associations which are based in the area will parade down through the streets of La Zenia and then will march down to The Hop in Calle San Antonio, which is located in La Zenia Village. The Hop will play host to entertainment from various local artists, including Andy McBride as Rod Stewart, TKO DJ Davy Jones, Nick Gold, Celena Deans, Brian Jenkins as Elvis Presley, Dave Cherry, Thomas and Kara Lumley, who form the duo Caution, Cathy Carson, TAABS, the Icení Dancers, Rascals, Raquel Peña's 'Flamenco Para Todos' Dance Group and the Belles and Beaux Morris Dance Team.

There will be a raffle, lots of stalls, classic cars and games and activities for the kids. The raffle prizes include two airline tickets to England courtesy of Monarch Airways as well as many other great prizes.

For further information or donations to the raffle please contact Eddie Coleman on 646 228 092 or Lynne Zaber on 616 331 045.

San Javier 14th International Jazz Festival.

This festival starts on June 25 and concludes on June 30. As usual it features some great names including Chicago, Eric Burdon & The Animals and many great acts. See www.jazz.sanjavier.es You can see Eric & The Animals for €35 or go to Benidorm in July and for 70 or 80 euros you can watch that talent-less media-whore, Peter Andre. Tough choice, eh!

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This is Emo Phillips, one of the craziest and original comedians out there. You can see some of his stuff on YouTube. Here is some more -

At my lemonade stand I used to give the first glass away free and charge five dollars for the second glass. The refill contained the antidote.

I love to go down to the schoolyard and watch all the little children jump up and down and run around yelling and screaming. They don't know I'm only using blanks.

I got some new underwear the other day. Well, new to me.

You don't appreciate a lot of stuff in school until you get older. Little things like being spanked every day by a middle aged woman: Stuff you pay good money for in later life.

My classmates would copulate with anything that moved, but I never saw any reason to limit myself.

I got in a fight one time with a really big guy, and he said, "I'm going to mop the floor with your face." I said, "You'll be sorry."

He said, "Oh, yeah? Why?"

I said, "Well, you won't be able to get into the corners very well."

I discovered my wife in bed with another man and I was crushed. So I said 'Get off me you two.'

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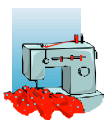


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Schwarzenegger - The Sperminator

"Schwarzenegger secretly fathered a child outside of marriage 10 years ago. He told his wife at the time but it took 10 years for her to figure out what he was saying." -Conan O'Brien

"I guess 'love child' is a nicer term than 'OK-Maria's-asleep child.' The woman was an employee. I'm not sure what she did, but I think she worked on Arnold's staff." -Craig Ferguson

"Arnold is already coming up with excuses. He said he was just auditioning to be the next head of the IMF." -Craig Ferguson

"Arnold Schwarzenegger fathered a lovechild back in 2003. To be fair, Arnold has been taking financial responsibility for the child: education, health care ... everything he's taken away from every other child in California." -Craig Ferguson

"Arnold Schwarzenegger fathered a child with a maid, and now the kid is mad at her for lying to him all these years. She'd told him his father was an actor." -Jay Leno

"Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver have put their former mansion on the market for \$23.5 million. It's not that clean though, because they had a maid but she was always busy doing other stuff." -Jimmy Fallon

"Arnold kept this secret for more than 10 years. You know how he did it? He moved the woman and child into an apartment right down the street from the Pakistani military academy." -Jay Leno

"I mostly feel bad for this kid that now has to learn how to spell the name Schwarzenegger." -Jimmy Kimmel

Boxing Fan

A woman, who was a great boxing fan, goes to a tattooist to have a picture of Lennox Lewis tattooed on her right inner thigh, and a picture of Mike Tyson tattooed on her left inner thigh.

However, when the tattooist is finished the woman is appalled by the quality of his handiwork. She goes into the manager's office, sits on his desk and opens her legs.

'Excuse me,' she says. 'But do you really think that looks like Lennox Lewis or that looks like Mike Tyson?'

'No,' replies the manager, 'but that one in the middle definitely looks like Don King.'

Jewish Mom

A Jewish woman becomes President of the USA and eventually persuades her mother to attend the swearing-in ceremony. The old lady is given a seat in the stands between the Chief of Staff and an Admiral.

As the ceremony reaches its climax, she nudges the Admiral in the ribs.

'See her, holding the Bible?' she says.

'Her brother's a doctor.'

The History of Spain, Part 23. The reign of Fernando VI.

Felipe V was succeeded by the last surviving son of his first marriage, Fernando VI (1746-59).

Fernando, sometimes referred to as 'The Learned,' married a homely Portuguese princess, Barbara de Bragança. Indeed Princess Barbara was so homely that Fernando was caused a visible shock when he was first presented to her. However, both Fernando and Barbara became devoted to each other.

The new king was emotionally unstable and preferred to devote his energy and resources on the upkeep of a lavish court which included the patronage of the composer Scarlatti and the famous Italian *castrato* singer Farinelli. Fortunately for Spain, Fernando succeeded in appointing some very effective ministers, particularly Ensenada and Carvajal. Although Ensenada, who was anti-British, favoured an alliance with France to counter the British naval supremacy; Carvajal - whose mother was related to English aristocracy - preferred to accommodate British economic interests. However both agreed that the priorities were to build up the military strength and financial resources of the state. International peace was a prerequisite to achieve these goals, allowing Spain to build-up their assets. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in October 1748 brought hostilities with Britain to an end, making Spain belligerent-free.

Ensenada then turned his attention to financial reform. He proposed the introduction of a single tax on income, the *catastro* (not to be confused with *castrato* in paragraph two, which means 'no jewels!') which would be levied on all subjects according to their ability to pay. For the time this was a revolutionary proposal and although a four-year detailed survey of property and income was carried out throughout Castile, the nobility and clergy strongly objected to the *catastro* believing that the proposed tax was a challenge to the established social order - meaning it would deprive them of much of their great wealth. Although this new tax was not introduced, Ensenada succeeded in introducing other taxation reforms - including placing provincial taxation under state control - and by 1759 had accumulated an unprecedented surplus of 300 million reales.

But as Ensenada always intended, it was the Spanish Navy who would be the focus of major new investment. The dockyards at Cádiz, Cartagena and Ferrol were rebuilt, engineers were sent abroad to learn the latest shipbuilding techniques, foreign designers and craftsmen were recruited and Spain took steps to achieve self-sufficiency in timber, ammunition and other naval supplies. By 1754 around one-fifth of total state expenditure went to the navy and Spain soon had 45 major warships and 19 frigates with many more on the drawing-boards. This caused major concern in British governmental circles. Britain was already 'facing-up' to France and a strong Spanish navy allied with the French could prove fatal to British interests.

Sir Benjamin Keene was the British ambassador in Madrid. He had already served a tenure in Madrid as ambassador from 1729 to 1739 but had to withdraw due to the 'War of Jenkin's Ear' which he unsuccessfully tried to stop in 1739. He was then sent as the British ambassador to Lisbon in Portugal, where, from there, he worked tirelessly towards ending Britain's war with Spain.

When the war ended in 1748, he returned as ambassador in Madrid. Keene was a popular diplomat and a confidant of many of the leading Spanish statesmen. Keene realised that the only way to curb the growth of the Spanish navy was to eliminate its champion, Ensenada. Keene engineered a conspiracy against Ensenada, stating that he had planned to attack some of the British ports in the Caribbean. This led to his removal from office and he was put under mild confinement, probably house arrest, for several years.

A grateful George II of England conferred the Order of the Garter on Keene, who ironically had the honour presented to him by the Spanish King in a special ceremony.

Ensenada's fall from power was accompanied by a purge of the more progressive government officials and gradually most of Ensenada's policies in relation to taxation and the navy were allowed to lapse and, as Keene had hoped, the naval budget was drastically pruned. While he was alive, Keene also managed to keep Spain out of most of the Seven Year's War using his influence with the new Spanish Chief Minister, the Irish-born Anglophile, Ricardo Wall.

For several years Spain lacked a coherent policy of any kind. When his queen died in August 1758, Fernando was devastated and lapsed into madness often throwing plates at his servants. He would not even dress, and wandered unshaven, unwashed and in a nightgown about his palace and grounds. Fernando died in August 1759, aged 45, almost a year after his wife.

(The latest Pirates of the Caribbean movie - On Stranger Tides - features a fictionalised account of Fernando VI.)



Fernando VI



Barbara de Bragança

Where there's a Will....

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%.

The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, 'Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.'

The gentleman replied, 'Oh, I haven't told my family yet.'

I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times already!' (Rik Fletcher & others)



I was recently asked “ what is a fund?” Well I will try over the next few months to try to explain what funds are. Funds are a bit like a pick and mix sweetie bag, there’s something for everyone. When looking around, you’ll notice that funds are often listed according to:

- the country or continent they invest in;
- the class of investments they make;
- how they are managed.

The abundance of choice may appear overwhelming, especially if you’re trusting someone you’ve never encountered with your hard earned savings. But by breaking the different types of funds down, it becomes easier. Funds can be generally categorized as:

Managed Funds

The investment companies, on behalf of a number of investors, manage these funds. Managed funds invest in a combination of assets from different regions. There are limits on how much of the fund can be made up with shares. There are three types of managed fund - cautious, balanced, and active. Cautious managed funds will invest about half your money in shares and the rest in fixed interest investments to minimize risk. Active managed portfolios, in comparison, can have up to 100% invested in equities, providing they have at least 10% invested in non-UK stocks and shares.

Asset Based

Asset based funds focus on a particular type of asset, such as technology, financial services or healthcare. Specific geographical regions, such as UK Corporate Bond Fund, or Global Property Fund, may provide further focus.

Geography Based

Geography based funds invest mainly in investments from a specific country or region. These can be named areas such as Northern America, Japan and The UK. There are also relative regions such as Emerging Europe, which would include countries such as Turkey or the former Baltic States. Some geographically based funds carry a high risk. It's vital to seek advice about these prior to investing.

Tracker Funds

Tracker Funds are designed to match the performance, good or bad, of a particular index such as the FTSE 100, or FTSE Europe. Because investments are based on the index and not individual choices made by a fund manager, trackers are cheaper to run than managed funds, therefore charges are less.

Ethical Funds

Designed for investors that want to have a clear conscience. Ethical funds invest in companies because of their moral, or ethical stance towards factors such as animal testing and the environment.

There are generally three types:

1. funds that exclude companies that have a negative impact such as tobacco or oil companies;
2. funds that only include companies with a positive impact, such as alternative energy companies;
3. and funds that invest in companies with a view to influencing their stance by becoming a major shareholder.

In these three groups the funds may specify other limits, such as investing in Corporate Bonds or Shares in companies on a particular index.

What else should you know?

Income or Growth

Most funds, unless they are specifically designed for income or growth, offer the option of paying out income to you, or reinvesting it back into the fund for growth.

Collective Funds

It is usual to invest in more than one fund to achieve a good spread of different investments. This helps to reduce risk because you are invested in more than one area. So you might choose a UK Corporate Bond Fund a UK Equity Fund, and a Global Equity Fund to counteract fluctuations in one area.

Taking the next step.

It is important to also look at each fund in isolation and the breakdown of investments, before making comparisons, This is where we at Maypole Financial Services have a dedicated fund selector , who on a regular basis selects the range of funds (There are well over 3,000) that we believe will suit our clients, If you would like information regarding the funds that we are suggesting at present please e-mail me mike@maypolefs.co.uk

Always make sure that your advisor in the UK or Spain is regulated by the FSA to provide advice.

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Political correctness is tyranny with manners- Charlton Heston

At the end of a busy day, a man and his wife were sitting at home on the veranda in the quiet of twilight. As the sun slowly sank below the mountains, he broke the comfortable silence saying, "I love you." She asked, "Is that you or the beer talking?" He replied, "It's me. I'm talking to the beer." Mel Bettell.

In the theatrical world, your status and celebrity determines the location of your dressing room; all the biggest and brightest stars have their dressing rooms on the ground floor. It will give you some indication of my popularity when I tell you that my dressing room is partly filled with hawk droppings and the mice keep having black-outs. Les Dawson

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There is also a hiking group in Torrevieja called Amigos Senderistas de Torrevieja. As a guide, in April they had a 16.8km easy walk - about four hours around the salt lake park. Anybody interested in joining their walks should email amigos-senderistas@torrevieja.com

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

Where?

The importance of a country is inversely proportional to the length of its national anthem. - Allen Otter

Australians are just British people who are happy. - Craig Hill

America is the only country where a significant proportion of the population believes that professional wrestling is real but the moon landing was faked.

-David Letterman

Illegal aliens have always been a problem in the United States. Ask any Indian.

- Robert Orben

I'm Canadian. That's like American but without the guns. - Dave Foley

I can't figure out why Columbia isn't a superpower by now. They produce coffee and cocaine, so it's not like they can't figure out how to motivate the workforce.

- Margot Black

Rome reminds me of a man who lives by exhibiting to travellers his grandmother's corpse. - James Joyce

REMEMBER!

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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

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Diabetic?

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