

THE DREAM SCENE

Issue no. 68 1st of October 2012



Bienvenidos a todos

The glorious weather continues here on the Costa. The twelve months since October 1, 2011, has been the driest of the last twelve years. The State Meteorological Agency (AEMET) in Valencia, stated that this summer was the second warmest since 1950, with temperatures 2.2 degrees above average and rainfall 60 percent below normal. This August was "extremely warm and dry", with an average temperature of 26 degrees, the highest in 42 years, and rainfall 60% below what is usual at this time. The highest temperature was on August 11 when it reached 45.6 degrees in Sevilla and 44.5 degrees in Córdoba.

To date we seem to have escaped the *gota fria*. This is a phenomenon which occasionally follows a very hot summer and brings with it very heavy rain and hail-stones large enough to damage a car. This rain can accumulate 50 litres of rain per square metre in one hour! October can be a high-risk month for these downpours, but this area has escaped the worst of it in recent years. Areas in Murcia and Northern Alicante tend to experience the worst of the deluges.

Many of the Brit's reading this will remember the 'winter of discontent' in the UK 1978-79. Demonstrations, occasionally developing into riots, are now becoming more frequent in the larger cities in Spain, particularly in Madrid and Barcelona. This is a reaction to the austerity program and the cut backs, with an additional gripe from the Catalans wishing for some kind of greater separation, preferably independence, from Spain. The government has just announced that all civil servant pay will be frozen during 2013. This is on top of the previous savage cuts. Personally I don't have an issue with cutting the pay of bureaucrats, but soldiers, firefighters, medical staff etc is a different matter. Demonstrations are becoming more violent and frequent and, as recent Spanish TV has shown, are often stage managed by the two large unions. Meanwhile, it seems that 11 EU foreign ministers, part of the "Future of Europe" group, have developed proposals to solve the economic crisis in the long term; led by Germany and comprising France, Spain, Italy, Poland, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Portugal and Luxembourg, they have agreed to proposals which will have far reaching implications if adopted. So they want to make The United States of Europe to save the Euro economies with Germany in charge. What a brilliant plan, why did nobody think of that before?



A big congratulations and 'Well Done' to John Reynolds and Joanne Riley (photos) from Entre Naranjos. On September 23, both John and Joanne completed a tandem parachute jump. It was part of their fund-raising initiative to raise €2,000 to help boost research into Alzheimer's and Crohn's Disease. To date they have raised more than €4,000 in pledges which is admirable.



Pat Brown would like to thank everybody who contributed to the cost of flowers for Patsy Andrews.

The Guardia Civil are warning all residents to be on the look-out for a gang of 'gay' burglars who are known to be operating in the area. It seems they are breaking into houses and re-arranging the furniture.

Wishing Alan from The Rendezvous a speedy recovery from his recent operation and thanks to Paul for helping to deliver the Dream Scenes this month. Have a great month, Mick & Tid.

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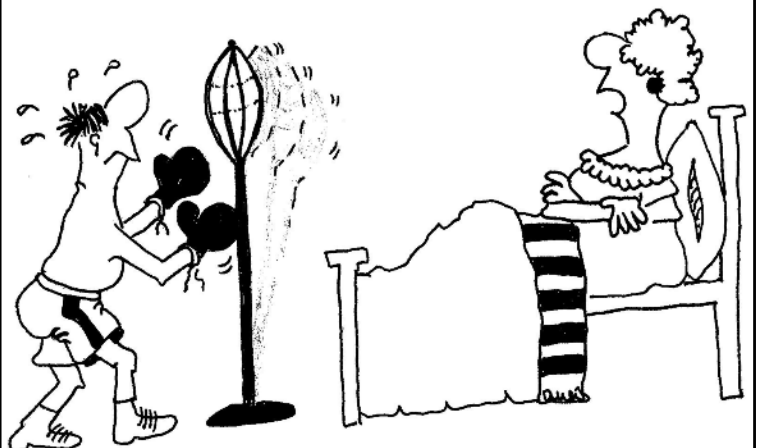
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Angela's Cartoon



"When I said I wanted to see action in the bedroom,
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It's all balls!

Standing on the first tee, a golfer said to his playing partner: 'Why don't you try this ball - you can't lose it?'

'How do you mean, you can't lose it?'

'It's a special ball. If you hit into the woods, it bleeps. If you hit it in water, it sends up bubbles, if it lands in deep rough, it emits a plume of smoke.'

'Wow! That's fantastic. Where did you get it?'

'I found it.'

Spot On!

A man was telling his friend: 'My grandfather predicted in advance the very year in which he was going to die. What' more, he knew the exact month, the exact day and even the time of day he was going to die. And he was right on every count.'

'That's uncanny,' said the friend. 'How did he know all that?'

'The judge told him.'



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For me, one of the many enjoyable things about living in Spain is the interesting arguments and friction between the various disparate political groups and the problems encountered by an imperfect regionalism in dealing with the economic and social challenges of the 21st century.

While PM Rajoy continues to prevaricate on an inevitable bailout and the EU, the Bundesbank and the European Central Bank continue to 'sing from different hymn sheets'; many of the regions in Spain are unable to borrow abroad because of their poor credit rating, and are now demanding that central government bail them out with large loans.

The Valencian Region was the first to request additional funding from Madrid in the sum of €1.5 billion out of the country's €18 billion bailout fund. This was followed by a demand from Catalonia for €5 billion urgently. (Cataluña spent €500 million to date this year in promoting fiestas!) When Valencia saw how much Catalonia requested they upped their request 24 hours later to €4.5 billion, asking for 'all you can give.' One Valencian official stated that this amount would only cover 'current needs.' The province of Castellón has been given more than €3.5 billion so that the regional government there can make payments due from previous years. So to date these three communities have used up 13 billion of the €18 fund! Murcia then waded in requesting a bailout loan of €700 million.

However, waiting in the wings is Spain's 'black hole' - Andalusia. "Everything depends on Andalusia now," said Juan Rubio-Ramirez, an economist at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. "If Andalusia asks for aid, it could be a similar amount to Catalonia and that means the fund may not be enough." Andalusia has just asked for a billion € from the Government to get to the end of the month. The Andalusia President Griñán wants the money as a first instalment of a larger rescue.

In a new and over-due move, the Hacienda is publishing the accounts of each autonomous region every month. Previously these regional accounts were only available once a year. The idea is to avoid nasty surprises. In 2011 for example the Government had to modify the national deficit because of the regional shortfalls and deceptions.

Data from the European Central Bank shows that outflows from Spanish commercial banks reached €74bn (£59bn) in July, twice the previous monthly record. This brings the total loss over the past year to 10.9% of deposits, replicating the pattern seen in Greece as the crisis spread. Total capital exiting Spain in the first seven months came to €293 billion.

The transfer of the real estate bad debts held in Spanish banks into a new 'Bad Bank' will be completed by February. Sources at the Economy Ministry said they will publish the global figure and the needs of the individual banks for capital on September 28. The banks who need extra capital have until October 15 to apply. One newspaper reported (unsubstantiated) that the 'bad bank' would only pay €30 million for each €100 million of the toxic loans. Only the banks which have received funding grants can see their toxic assets acquired by the new 'bad bank'. This format is in a Memorandum signed with Europe over the rescue, and the cabinet has still to draw up a document with all the details. The 'bad bank' will have 15 years to dispose of these toxic assets/loans.

Meanwhile bad debts in Spanish banks are now close to 10% of total loans. A new record was set in July at 9.86%. The data comes from the Bank of Spain who say that the 'doubtful' loans in the Spanish financial system are almost €179 billion.

Annual inflation in Spain went up in August to 2.7%, up five tenths over the month.

The administrators have raised the size of the financial black hole in Spanair to €33 million. The company only has assets of €3.8 million to meet all of its commitments.

Carrefour has lost €1 million following their launch in Greece and Singapore. The results are for the first half of this year. There was also a fall in sales in Spain and their investment here was 'partially' compensated by lower distribution costs.

There were two transport strikes of trains and buses in Madrid and Barcelona in September.

The city of Orihuela has now decided to charge a fee to cover the costs associated with civil marriages; previously there was no charge. The new charge will cover costs such as personnel, cleaning, water, light & air conditioning. Also if rice and rose petals are thrown at the newlyweds or if the traditional wedding march is played through speakers, a premium will have to be paid.

The decision by the national government to make the paperless illegal immigrants pay for their medical attention has been rejected by some of Spain's regions. Andalucía, Cataluña, the Basque Country, Asturias and the Canaries are refusing to charge the immigrants, and Galicia is the only PP region which says it will continue to attend to the immigrants. More than 1,700 medical professionals have also voiced their objections.



The Spanish Royal Family has commenced a new charm offensive, updating its website with audio, videos and more photos. This photo of King Juan Carlos, Prince Felipe, and the Infanta Leonor, was released to the press as 'The present and the future of the Spanish Crown.' Following the revelations of the king's hunting escapades in Africa and the shenanigans of the 'odgy' Duke of Palma, an effort is being made to improve the Royal image. You can view the Spanish royal website here - <http://www.casareal.es/ES/Paginas/home.aspx>

The Government wants to obtain an extra €2.7 billion in energy taxes. Seven new taxes are to be created in an attempt to cut the long-term debt which the government has with the electricity companies, but the government has promised not to interfere in your electricity bill any more. And if you believe that.....

The President of the National Energy Commission has said that electricity prices will go up by 8% more in 2013!

The Spanish Secretary General of Transport, Carmen Librero, travelled to Dublin to analyse the security incidents experienced recently by Ryanair, and to strengthen cooperation. Meanwhile Michael O'Leary, the head-honcho at Ryanair, has put two open letters on his website criticising the Minister and accusing her of document falsification. Since then the Irish aviation regulators have cleared Ryanair.

In what can be seen as a reliable economic indicator for the building trade, orders for cement in Spain have fallen to levels last seen in the 70's, down by 34.25% in the first eight months of this year at 9.56 million tons. With the additional increase in IVA on new homes scheduled for this coming January and the exorbitant prices still being charged for new builds locally, only a 'mug' would now buy a new house in the coastal area.

I accidentally mixed my Viagra with my iron pills last month; now I can't stop pointing north.

What's Up? continued

Well, it seems Torreveija has its own 'Spiderman.' Several penthouses in the city were subject to a wave of more than two dozen robberies during the summer. *Spidy* would jump from roof to roof and force open the doors to penthouse flats. The Guardia Civil noticed that the robberies had taken place always in the afternoon. After collecting witness statements and camera images, the 29-year-old suspect was identified and arrested while committing a robbery at Darblade Photographers in Torreveija. Jewels, small appliances and cash were taken from the penthouses and the jewellery was then sold to shops in Torry and San Pedro. €30,000 in cash was recovered.

The Spanish Ministry of Development is to pay €600 million to firms and individuals for land which they expropriated for state use. Minister Ana Pastor stated that some of the debts date back seven years!

Guardia Civil officers arrested a 16-year-old in the northern Valencian town of Benicassim. The young man attacked his mother with a axe after she turned the WiFi off to force him to go to school. The youth, who has now been charged with domestic violence, threatened to kill his mother and destroyed part of her furniture. The 47-year-old mum had previously been attacked by another of her children.

At least two local radio stations have been ordered to shut down. The Valencian Authorities have warned those who are broadcasting in the region without a proper licence to cease their broadcasts immediately, otherwise they will face severe consequences. (This could include a fine of €200,000.) TKO FM & TKO Gold have now ceased broadcasting. A new round of application for licences will be invited 'soon' say the authorities. And that is a Spanish 'soon'! There are more than 2,000 unlicensed radio stations operating in Spain.



The sculptor of the hugely controversial statue (above) placed in the centre of the roundabout outside Castellon airport has denied that his piece is rusty, and has branded his critics as "uneducated scavengers". Juan Ripollés, defended his sculpture after the provincial spokesman for the Compromis Party, Carles Mulet, claimed that it was rusty barely 2 months after being unveiled. The 25m high, 20 tonne bronze statue was originally expected to cost €300,000 but ended up being €127,000 over budget. Ripollés insisted that the brownish-orange appearance of the sculpture is its natural and intended colour, and claimed that the comments had been generated by "uneducated scavengers" who had a political agenda in wishing to condemn anything connected with the airport. The artist is considering whether to sue for defamation. (Source: El Economista)

It's 'Adios' to the incandescent light bulb both in Spain and across the European Union as production stops on September 1. The light bulb with more than 130 years of history is now considered to use too much energy, although I have no doubt you will still find some in the Chinese *todos*.

Some welcome news in the property market at last. During the second quarter of this year, April to June, Torreveija and Orihuela led the country in the total of completed resales. These are obviously attributed to the coastal areas and were 860 and 655 respectively. There were also 77 sales in Alicante and 68 in Pilar de Horadada. New property sales during the period were 58 in Torreveija and 133 in Orihuela. You can read the full article here in Spanish - <http://www.diarioinformacion.com/vega-baja/2012/09/18/torreveija-orihuela-lideran-venta-viviendas-segunda-mano-espana-abril-junio/1295164.html>

I came from a tough neighbourhood. Nothing but killings. I went out and bought a water bed - and there was a guy at the bottom of it. Joey Adams

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Security in the Naval Base in Rota (Cádiz) may not be all it should be. The Guardia Civil have arrested a 40-year-old soldier (sailor?) stationed at the base on suspicion of stealing copper wire at a military installation there and later selling it at a junkyard in the area. Now this wasn't a couple of kilos of wire which he stuffed in his pockets: the Navy reported in August that two spools of cable, 150 metres long and each weighing 6,000 kilos were 'nobbled' from their shipyard. This electrical equipment was used to provide shore power for ships at berth. I suppose the Navy were lucky he didn't decide to steal one of their ships and sell it as scrap! It seems he would have no problem in getting it out of the navy yards.



The new iPhone Apple announced they would be giving its existing Google Maps app the boot and replacing it with its own one. One Spanish newspaper, El Pais, has pointed out that the new service shows serious errors, for example the Ebro River is now in Río de Janeiro, and the Costa Brava can be found in South Africa. Tom Tom who supplied the maps has denied all responsibility for the errors.

Rayo and Real Madrid were due to play a football match in La Liga on the evening of September 23. However the match was delayed and finally cancelled as some of the floodlight couldn't be turned on. Finally it was discovered that the cables for the lights had been deliberately cut. It seems that Rayo, who are new to La Liga, were charging their season ticket holders an extra €23 to see the game with Real Madrid and they were none too happy with the charge!

Men

- Did you hear about the new 'morning after' pill for men? - It changes their blood type.
- Actually there were four wise men on their way to Bethlehem. One of them said he knew a short cut.
- The problem is that God gives men a brain and a penis, and only enough blood to run one at a time.

The local Orihuela Town Council continues to haemorrhage. The latest departure is a member of the Green Party, Manuel Culiáñez, who has resigned his position in the council to return to school teaching. Culiáñez was the councillor responsible for Environment and Heritage. The real problem here is that many in the ruling tripartite have little confidence in the longevity of the council, choosing to return to the security of their previous jobs. A number of other councillors in the PSOE have taken similar steps but the real turmoil has been in the Clr Party, who together with the Socialists (PSOE) and the 'Greens' (Los Verdes) make up the ruling tripartite. Here the senior member of Clr, Pedro Mancebo, sacked the CLARO member Bob Houliston from their joint alliance in the council. Mancebo then sacked his own party coordinator, Pablo Vidal, and more recently the same fate awaited his fellow colleague and councillor, Asunción Mayoral, who was responsible for Personnel and Human Resources. This now only leaves Mancebo and fellow Councillor (for Finance) Juan Ignacio López-Bas as the sole Clr representatives in the council. No doubt Juan Ignacio will be looking over his shoulder in the future!



More than 50 residents demonstrated peacefully, if noisily, outside the Orihuela Costa Ayuntamiento on August 11 against the Councillor for the Coast and for Tourism and Beaches, Pedro Mancebo. (See photo) Residents from neighbourhood communities complained about several issues including the poor rubbish collection service, dirty beaches and Mancebo's spending of €40,000 on DJ Carlos Jean for 5Fest. Many, including the English media, were unaware that the council also spent another €7,434 for 'musical performances' on the evenings of August 15 to 18 during 5FEST at Playa Flamenca, performances which nobody seems to have seen or heard about! (Source: *Informacion*)

The Socialist councillor, Antonia Moreno, announced that there are significantly more than 12,000 illegal homes in the Orihuela Region. Whereas most of these are in the rural areas, some are beachfront homes which have never paid any property tax at all! It is now planned to find every illegal home in the municipality and launch legalisation procedures so that these homeowners can be taxed properly. Many properties have been constructed on plots where infrastructure or facilities are planned in the new Town Plan (PGOU). This is a great idea. Why should illegal properties escape paying property tax?

Councillor Moreno has also announced that parcels of municipal land will be auctioned off in an effort to raise €13 million. Participants have to provide 3% of their bid price at the time of bidding, with the plots being allocated to the highest bidders. Successful bidders will be notified by mid-October. Surprisingly the Green Party, part of the Orihuela tripartite, have been remarkably quiet on this issue, preferring not to rock the boat.

Stay On The Right Side!

There were four 80-year-old men playing golf. One complained the hills were too high. The second complained the bunkers were too deep. The third said the holes were too wide. The fourth one said, 'Shut up! At least we're still on the right side of the grass!'



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Local News continued.

The Guardia Civil have seized gold, silver, watches, chains, pendants, bracelets, coins etc from a gold shop in Torrevieja. The items had been on public display but the shop could not prove the items were acquired legally. The items are available for viewing at Torrevieja Guardia Civil headquarters from 11:00-13:00 until October 31.

The final elements of the pipework to the sea from the desalination plant at Torrevieja - the largest in Europe - is due to be completed in December. The first tests of the plant are due to commence in January 2013. Completion of the project was delayed by a couple of years, solely due to political differences between the PP-led local council and the then PSOE-led central government. The total cost of the project, which is part funded by the EU, is expected to be around €297 million.

The newly refurbished recreational park in Los Balcones is due for completion in November. About 35,000 square metres have been developed at a total cost of €864,000 and employed around 24 workers during the project. The new playground will also incorporate a sandpit for children. A new feature will be a 'recreational' area of nearly 2,000 square meters for dogs. If the dogs and cats don't poop in the children's sandpit it will be an achievement! The scheme will also include two seating areas. So far the scheme looks very bland to me. I hope they plant some trees in what seems at this stage to be a very sterile park.

Alingi, the popular Torrevieja restaurant, has opened another outlet in the Filton Centre in Los Balcones. Three courses for €7.90!

My ex-wife claimed she was violated. Knowing my ex-wife, it wasn't a moving violation. (Woody Allen)

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ACTIVITIES AT LA CASITA, DREAM HILLS.

This is just a 'nudge' to remind you of the activities at La Casita, which is located between the swimming pools in Dream Hills.

Regular Spanish classes are being held there by Carolina. These address different levels of proficiency, from beginners. Check out the external notice board or phone Carolina on 966 798 137 for details.

On Thursday mornings there is the 'Book Swap' which is open from 10am until 12pm. Bring a book or several and swap them! There are thousands of books on display and almost every taste is catered for. (There may even be a copy of '40 Shades of Filthy' skulking about.) You never know!

Every Friday morning there is a Coffee Morning between 10:30am and 12:30pm. This is probably better suited to the gentler sex and it gives them a chance to leave the old grouch at home making a 'dog's dinner' of the new shelves.

Check the notice board as well for details of other activities such as card nights, darts and of course the popular petanca (boules) sessions which are held nearby.

Tough times in San Miguel de Salinas

Now that the traditional inflow of funds to council coffers from the building trade has virtually dried up and the recession continues, local councils are digging deep (into our pockets!) to raise additional taxes. San Miguel de Salinas has suffered for several years with water problems. Even the water provided now is deemed unfit for human consumption, although residents are paying a fortune for it.

Taxation on buildings, installations and works have increased from a base of 2.4 to 3.5%, an increase of almost 50% in the rate.

The town hall has also increased the road tax with an extra €3 p.a. to be paid by low powered vehicles, to an increase of an extra €60 p.a. for those with high-powered gas guzzlers.

But even the dead have not been spared: the cost of a funeral niche in San Miguel has now risen from €330 to €75! In neighbouring Torrevieja the charge is just €15.

The continuing flight of funds from Castellón Airport.

Money continues to pour out of Castellón Airport. It has now been revealed how the airport spent a total of €5,092,596.22 last year on advertising and promoting an airport that is still not operational.

The figures were down from the €7,003,181.27 spent in 2010.

For Jan 2012 to date operating expenses have totaled €6,484,935 - the highest to date on a pro rata basis. Of this sum €368,865.49 has been spent on employing the seven employees; €5,092,596 on advertising; €18,663 on professional services and €23,074 was paid to contractors.

Of the €368,865.49 paid in employing staff, €295,871 was spent on wages and €72,994 on social security contributions - meaning that the seven staff were paid an average of €42,267! AND STILL NO FLIGHTS!

CAM Bank, the latest.

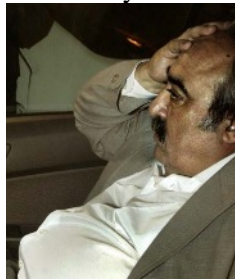
The Sabadell bank is cutting 1,773 jobs in CAM bank, 600 of them as early retirement. Sabadell has bought the bankrupt CAM savings banks but conditions imposed on the deal by Brussels meant they have to close 450 branches. 104 have already been closed but a further 360 have to be closed by the weekend of December 7, 2012.

More pleasing is the news that the National High Court in Madrid have temporarily suspended some of the high pension awards former CAM executives and directors awarded themselves. 14 pensions in total have been blocked, two of which come to around €500,000 per annum. Auditors looking into the bank's affairs believe that some pensions were pre-dated. The High Court judge said that the 'only logical reason for falsifying the dates was apparent justification lent by 2010's declared profits of €244 million.' The decision to backdate the pension documents was allegedly made to forestall possible objections from prospective merger partners - Cajasur, Caja Cantabria and Caja Extramadura. These banks eventually decided not to amalgamate with CAM, which triggered the Bank of Spain takeover. It must be obvious to the dumbest yokel that the 'profits' declared in 2010 were fiction as the bank folded the following year! Unfortunately the High Court ruling does not apply to the multimillion handouts paid to early-retiring CAM executives in the previous year.

Local Mayors in the Mire.

Readers of this publication will be no strangers to the fact that Spanish mayors, particularly town ones, seem to attract as much trouble as a drunk girlfriend. Mayors in Spain wield significant political and financial power, unlike in other countries where they just seem to wear a gold chain and open supermarkets; except of course Boris! With this power comes maximum temptation and endless opportunities. Some of the cases which get to court are often shelved being nothing more than jealous and mischief-making *denuncias* from opposition parties. Thankfully, with more open government and a crusading press these new corruption cases are fewer than they have been in the past but are by no means eliminated. Although there are dozens of cases nationwide, I outline below a few of the local ones.

The ex-Socialist Mayor of nearby Bigastro (population less than 7,000) has been banned from holding public office for seven years. José Joaquín Moya (photo) had held the position for 25 years until 2008 when he was arrested for irregularities and questionable activities relating to the awarding of a 35,000 M2 plot to a building company in August 2003. The municipal secretary received the same sentence. Despite the proven corruption charges and top-end expensive vehicles 'changing hands,' no fines were levied nor jail time awarded. Meanwhile the residents in Bigastro were shocked to see their IBI rates increase by around €30 per annum. The average IBI rate now being paid in the town and area is around €350 per property!



Locally, the ex-Torre Vieja PP mayor, Pedro Hernández Mateo, is no stranger to the inside of courtrooms. Various politicians from the opposition parties in the town have lodged a number of *denuncias* his way which have resulted in court appearances. One of the first was that he benefited by using insider-knowledge regarding a property deal in the Torre Vieja area and pocketed a profit of several million euros. He was found not guilty of this charge. Last month he attended another hearing concerning the improper use of public hall facilities in the town for political purposes. Again he was found not guilty of this charge. On October 26 he will be back in court again, this time charged with the forgery of public documents and breach of trust regarding the awarding of the town's rubbish collection contract. If found guilty he faces between three and five years in the clink.

Before that on October 1, the former PP mayor of Orihuela, Monica Lorente, will face a judge regarding fraud allegations concerning the award of the rubbish collection contract for the Orihuela Area. 28 others will also be appearing in the case.

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Via Park V

What has Bush been up to?

"It's interesting what former presidents do when they leave office. Bush is now working as a motivational speaker. And if you want to be motivated, who better to turn to than the guy who invaded the wrong country and started a depression." —David Letterman

"Former President George W. Bush has hired a man to lead his presidential think tank in Dallas. The man was hired because he was the only candidate who could say the words, 'George W. Bush think tank' with a straight face." —Conan O'Brien

- Elvis, my pet mouse, has just died. He was caught in a trap.
- Samson was a biblical tough guy, but his dad Samsonite was even more of a hard case.
- So Anders Breivik only got 21 years for killing 77 people. I can't wait for Justin Bieber's Norway Tour.....I'll probably only get a fine.
- My husband was a war baby. When he was born his parents took one look at him and started fighting. He is so stupid he thinks the Gaza Strip is an Egyptian belly dance! He took me out for tea once. It was alright - but I hadn't planned to donate blood that day.

How High?

A kangaroo kept getting out of his enclosure at the zoo. After recapturing the kangaroo, the zookeeper put up a ten-foot fence. Again the kangaroo was out next morning, roaming around the zoo. So the fence was extended to twenty feet. But again the kangaroo was out the next morning. Frustrated zoo officials built a fence forty feet high.

A camel in the next enclosure asked the 'roo, 'How much higher do you think they'll go?'

The kangaroo replied, 'About a thousand feet, I guess - unless somebody starts locking the gate!'

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'Will there be anything else, sir?' asked the room service waiter after setting out dinner for two.

'No, thank you. That will be all.'

As he turned to leave, he noticed a beautiful satin negligee on the bed. 'Anything for your wife, sir?'

'Yes. Good idea. Bring up a postcard.'

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He reminded me of the Irishman's description of soda water:
'It was a tumbler of piss with a fart in it.' Abraham Lincoln.

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Here come 'de judge.

A judge in a court addresses the prisoner standing in the dock.

'Do you wish to challenge the jury?' he says.

'Not all at once,' says the prisoner, 'but I reckon I could go a few rounds with the little fat guy at the back.'

The continuing Andalucian ERE scandal.

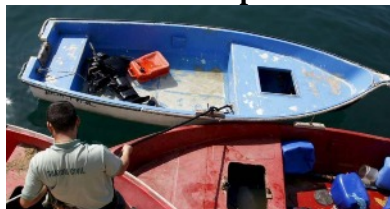
In previous issues, I have referred to the EREgate scandal in Andalucia. This refers to the chaotic management within the Andalucian Department of Employment, which organised the uncontrolled distributed €1.217 billion among its citizens. Some of the funds were distributed correctly as redundancy/early retirement (ERE) payments to individuals. However, an as yet undisclosed but substantial portion of the fund was used as a 'slush fund' paying funding grants of millions to failing companies friendly to the Socialist regime; paying exorbitant arrangement fees to lawyers and advisors; and the payment of substantial redundancy payments to people who were friends, relations and supporters but who never actually worked for the companies. The judge who is trying to untangle this mess is Mercedes Alaya (photo). Considerable pressure is being exerted on Mrs Alaya at both a professional and personal level by the Andalucian ruling establishment. However, she has gained tremendous popularity among the public nationally and is now seen as 'the bravest judge in Spain.'



The ruling junta have refused to set up a commission of enquiry and this has led the opposition to believe that the PSOE president of Andalucia, José Antonio Griñán (photo), is trying to cover-up his involvement in the matter. Griñán did however authorise an internal audit by the Cámara de Cuentas - the Accounts Bureau. But then on September 17, the ABC newspaper revealed that in the final audit report which had 312 paragraphs, 12 of these have been deleted and another 26 modified before it was released. ABC, who managed to obtain a copy of the original report, believe that the deleted paragraphs are critical of the involvement of the most senior of party officials. In August, the Andalucian Director of Finance from 2000 to 2010, Manuel Gomez, reported to the Cámara de Cuentas that he had on fifteen separate occasions warned the three regional presidents, including the current one, Griñán, of irregularities and deficiencies in the scheme but nobody listened! Not a single euro has been recovered yet.



Boat People



During early September, a number of small boats containing illegal immigrants were intercepted off the Costa Blanca and the Costa Calida, four of them in less than 24 hours. The boats originated from North Africa, probably Algeria. The illegals were detected off the coasts of Cartagena, Alicante, Santa Pola and Benidorm. The boat which was taken ashore in Benidorm is the top one in the photo and held 12 immigrants aged between 18 and 30 and two minors, from Algeria, Iran, Libya and Lebanon. They were lucky to have escaped drowning on the 300 kms + journey. Many boats probably sink on the journey with the occupants drowned. Last year three would-be immigrants were detected off-shore in a child's inflatable. Due to lack of funding, the Guardia Civil can only patrol the coastline for 12 hours a day. Their association calls for 24 hour patrols.

Idiot or Idiots of the Month Award

There are a couple of contenders this month, and I will leave it to you to decide who best deserves the award.

The first group contains a couple of British lads. The Guardia Civil on Ibiza has said that they arrested two 19 year old Britons, Jonathan J.W. and Nicolas S. for showing their genitals to the crew and some of the passengers during a flight from Newcastle to Ibiza. It happened in flight when the two British men, in a state of noticeable excitement, stood up and dropped their 'kegs' to their ankles. They then walked up and down the plane. This exhibition on board went on for three hours. The pilot had no hesitation in requesting the Guardia Civil meet the plane when it landed in Ibiza and on arrival they were formally accused in Ibiza of the alleged crime of exhibitionism.

There were children on the plane and under article 185 of the Penal Code if anyone carries out extreme acts in front of children they face a prison sentence of 6 months to a year and/or a fine. I am amazed that no gentlemen on the plane intervened. Still, it's more new friends for Big Gay Juan in the Ibiza 'chokey.'

The next contenders for top place on the podium are a gang of three; two Spanish and one Romanian all from Crevillente, who stole a Ford Fiesta and a Yamaha moped in Santa Pola one Sunday last month. Now a large moped and three individuals crammed into a small Ford Fiesta is bound to raise eyebrows, as it did with the local police. When the car failed to stop for a policeman, a high-speed car chase took place through Santa Pola. One policeman and a civilian were almost run over and the fugitives also rammed a police car that tried to block their way.



At this stage several parts of the town were blocked-off by police as it was the last day of the fiesta, and a car chase through crowds would have resulted in carnage. During the chase the moped fell out of the back of the fiesta, and in their haste the would-be absconders crashed the Fiesta into a tree....outside the Santa Pola police station! The car thieves were then 'gently dragged' from the stolen car and taken to the Santa Pola health centre and then to Elche General Hospital. The men suffered numerous bruises but no serious injuries. Well, if you try to run-down a policeman.....!

Little Johnny

Teacher asks her class for a sentence with the word 'beautiful' in it twice. First she calls on little Suzy, who responds with, 'My father bought my mother a beautiful dress and she looked beautiful in it.'

'Very good, Suzy,' replies the teacher and calls on little Michael. 'My mummy planned a beautiful party and it turned beautifully,' he says.

'Excellent,' says the teacher and then calls on little Johnny.

Little Johnny says, 'Last night my sister told my father she was pregnant, and he said, 'Beautiful: f***ing beautiful!'

Teacher, to little Johnny: 'Name six things that contain milk?'

Johnny: 'Ice-cream, custard and four cows.'

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*Cat's motto: no matter what you've done wrong,
always try to make it look like the dog did it.*

Guns, Guns, Guns!

More than 22,272 firearms have been intercepted and seized by police in the port of Algeciras in the Bay of Gibraltar. The firearms, all blank firing pistols, could easily be converted into powerful firearms. The cache was discovered in a container of clothes from Turkey which was destined for the Republic of Djibouti. 13,500 pistol magazines were also detected in the consignment. In what is the largest operation against contraband in recent years. The pistols and detonators could easily be modified or transformed into more powerful firearms.



This is the largest shipment of weapons found in a Spanish customs operation and the value of the cache on the black market could exceed two million euros. In 2009, also in Algeciras Port, six pistols, 24 rifles and a large supply of ammunition was seized. In 2007, officers in the port intercepted a container from Nicaragua which contained 400 handguns, 305 shotguns, 386 rifles and 310 compromised air guns.



121
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A blast from the past.

- Just look at the state of this place! I could write my name in the dust on that piano.
- Ain't education a wonderful thing!

(Ted Ray and Mrs Mosseltoff, the cleaner)

One for the sailors

Once upon a time there was a famous sea captain. This captain was very successful at what he did; for years he guided merchant ships all over the world. Never did stormy seas or pirates get the best of him. He was admired by his crew and fellow captains. He was a rock.

However, there was one thing different about this captain. Every morning he went through a strange ritual. He would lock himself in his captain's quarters and open a small safe. In the safe was an envelope with a piece of paper inside. He would stare at the paper for a minute, and then lock it back up. Afterwards he went about his daily duties.

For years this went on and his crew became very curious. Was it a treasure map? Was it a letter from a long lost love? Everyone speculated about the contents of the strange envelope.

One day the captain died at sea. After laying the captain's body to rest, the first mate led the entire crew into the captain's quarters. He opened the safe, got the envelope, opened it and the first mate turned pale and showed the paper to the others.

Four words were on the paper: Port Left, Starboard Right.

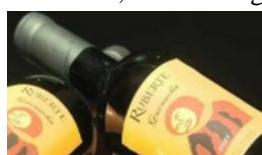
Botched restoration a success?

Many of you will recall the article last month about the botched restoration of the Ecce Homo (Behold the Man) painting in a church in Borja in Zaragoza. News of the restoration went global and thousand have flocked to the church to view the 'masterpiece.' However, this Catholic church noticed that the donations were not increasing in proportion to the visitors. The church then started to charge €1 per head for viewing and photo opportunities, collecting more than €2,000 in the first four days! Now around 3,000 per week visit the painting. When the restorer, Cecilia Giménez (photo) became aware of this, she instructed her lawyer to sue the church for a share of the profits due to the stress the whole episode caused her. (No fool Cecilia!)



A winery in Aragon, Ruberte, has also decided to cash in on the publicity and has launched a wine from the 2011 harvest, with an image of the restoration on the label. 5,000 bottles will go on sale immediately and a reserve of 20,000 is being held if the launch is a success.

Ryanair have even announced a 'special' to the nearest Spanish airport in Zaragoza, offering discounted seats for those wanting to see the "creative restoration.



Lime Bar Golf Society Los Altos, Orihuela Costa

The golf societies venue for the 12th September 2012 was held at the Las Ramblas Golf Course.

A tricky course for most of the high handicap players, this resulted in the scores being fairly moderate. However the players enjoyed a good days golf.

The competition was in the stableford format, and the scores were recorded, as follows:-

Nearest the Pin on the 6th was Dave Cahill.

Nearest the Pin on the 15th was Andy McDonald.

Nearest the Pin on the 18th was Stewart Coleman.

Best Guest was Graham Mitchell with a score of 22

Silver Class 3rd Place was Barry Sawyer with a score of 22 points.

Silver Class 2nd Place was Andy McDonald with a score of 24 points.

Silver Class 1st Place was Dave Railton with a score of 25 points.

Gold Class 3rd Place was Steve Cottle with a score of 25 points.

Gold Class 2nd Place was Dave Cahill with a score of 33 points.

Gold Class 1st Place was Stewart Coleman with a score of 33 points on count back. See photo.

A day's golf in pleasant company, with a thank you to Captain Mick Slater and Vice Captain and also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar for providing an enjoyable meal.

Anyone wishing to join our friendly society just needs to phone Mick on 659866468 or Stewart on 966180003.

The society would like to congratulate Norman Dobson who was informed he was a Granddad on completing the 18th hole.

(Colin Clarke)



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with Snowball Jackpot!

Saturday's - Fun Quiz with Rings - 8pm

Quiz prizes for winner & loser,

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PHOENIX GOLF SOCIETY

Septembers outing which was Captains Day was held at Hacienda De Alamo Golf Course. Captain Peter Brain was in attendance throughout the day circulating in a buggy but was unable to play due to injuries received participating in the other Phoenix pass time (lets go hang gliding without a hang glider). However he did make a nuisance of himself and gave his wife Jackie a rest.

The course was in good condition and the competition stiff with the results as follows.

Overall winner - Ron Smith, Gold Category - Rob Hughes, Silver Category - Graham Mitchell, Bronze Category - Terry Dunn.

Nearest the pins were Daryl De Silver, Rob Hughes and Graham Mitchell. Longest drive was Dave Cahill.

The Must Try Harder trophy went to Les Roundtwaite.

To round off the day music and food were provided at the Phoenix Bar Via Park 5. Where details of our October outing at Roda can be found. (Rob Hughes)

The Baby

Harry and Jane were trying for a baby, but Harry was 'firing blanks.' He went to the doctor who prescribed a course of monkey gland injections. These did the trick and Jane was pregnant within a month. Nine months later Harry telephoned the doctor to give him the good news.

'Congratulations,' said the doctor. 'Is it a boy or a girl?'

'We're not sure,' replied Harry. 'Once we get a ladder we'll be able to pry it off from the ceiling fan and find out.'

Growth in second-hand market.

The deepening financial crisis in Spain is spurring massive growth in the second hand market and internet purchases nationwide.

Cash strapped Spaniards who have traditionally bought items brand-new using cash or credit are increasingly turning to the second hand market, "*Segundo mano*" in Spanish, in an effort to save money. There has always been a cultural resistance to buying second hand or nearly new items in Spain, however this attitude is changing as the crisis continues to bite.

Angel Rodriguez, a car sales executive in Madrid told Reuters how six years ago the ratio of new cars sold compared to second hand vehicles was 5:1 but now the trend has reversed and now sell five second hand cars for every new car sold.

Likewise, car boot sales are appearing across the country as sellers eager to raise cash are greeted by hungry buyers keen to snap up a bargain.

Retailers have not missed out either despite falling high street sales. Many are reporting record growth in their internet based retail sales as Spaniards turn to the net to save money.

Online shopping in Spain, compared to most other developed western countries, was never really used to purchase items on a regular basis. However circumstances have changed forcing traditional shoppers into net savvy bargain hunters.

Popular worldwide auction websites have seen their traffic and sales increase substantially also as the crisis, double dip recession, deep austerity and increased taxes continues to strangle family finances across the Iberian Peninsula. (Tumbit)

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If you find computers too complicated or need assistance in your everyday Spanish life, then, I'm your man!

Computer training and translations are my speciality. I live in the Dreams Hills area. I'm originally from Spain, and have two years of experience as a translator, and many years dealing with computers, since I have two computer-related college degrees from the US.

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- TOWN HALLS
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A short history of every Jewish holiday:
They tried to kill us. We won. Let's eat.

Food, Glorious Food!

A new world record for the "largest seafood cocktail in the world" was set in Valencia in early September. Master chefs from Vigo in North Western Spain prepared a traditional Galician recipe in a container which was eight feet in diameter and ten inches deep(photo). This coincided with the opening of a seafood festival of Valencian seafood. The giant cocktail comprised 800 kilos of buey de mar, 500 kilos of spider crab, 300 kilos of onions, 80 litres of oil, 40 litres of vinegar, 20 kilos of pepper and 70 dozen eggs. Twelve people have worked for two days to crumble the shellfish meat and everything was mixed by hand not machines. The completed disk contained 2,000 individual portions.

MarisGalicia, who made the cocktail, were promoting 'A taste of Galicia' and had erected a dining tent large enough to house 1,000 people. The Galician festival lasted until September 23 and an estimated 110 tons of seafood and 35,000 bottles of Albariño were served to 140,000 visitors



In early September, the Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met for a working lunch in the Palace of La Moncloa (photo) in Madrid. La Moncloa is the official residence of the PM. If you ever wondered what the Great & the Good have while you are tucking into your Spam Fritters, we can reveal the secrets. The two 'big wigs' started with a Vegetable Pie. The main course was Tenderloin Steak served with Cabrales cheese. (Cabrales cheese is the most famous blue cheese in Spain, being produced in four little villages in eastern Asturias using traditional farmhouse methods. The hard blue cheese is made from unpasturised cow's milk which is also blended with goat's and ewe's milk. Only limited quantities of the cheese are produced.) For dessert the pair were served chocolate and mint ice cream with berries in an almond tulip. Naturally the food was accompanied by Spanish wines. If Rajoy goes to Berlin it may be 'Humble Pie' followed by Bratwurst and sauerkraut.

Groucho's Wisdom

Groucho Marx, to Mrs Story, a quiz show contestant. 'How many children do you have?' Mrs Story, 'Nineteen.' 'Nineteen!' says Groucho, 'Why so many? It must be a terrible responsibility and a burden.'

Mrs Story, 'Well, because I love my children and I think that's our purpose on earth, and I love my husband.'

Groucho, 'I love my cigar too, but I take it out of my mouth once in a while!'

Fly Screens 4 U!!

'Feel the breeze not the bites'

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Now they are in their 8th year with countless happy customers, going from strength to strength with their new summer promotion of a gift of an electricity energy saver which could help to reduce your electricity costs and help to pay for your fly screens, on all orders over 3 windows.

We carry with us a sample window incorporating our unique flexible fly screen to demonstrate how the system works.

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Going Bats over Mozzies?

Although we tend to believe that mosquitos are purely a scourge of Mediterranean climates, they can be also just as annoying in the northern climes of Norway, Sweden and Finland as some of your neighbours in Spain will confirm. Some people are certainly more prone to mozzie-bites than others. I get bitten very rarely, maybe once a year. I put this down to mosquito blinds - see advert, Halley spray and a concentration of alcohol in my blood that would give, even the toughest mozzie, an excruciating hangover - "Stay away from that bloke; he'll make you dizzy and throw-up!"

Locally, one of the main mosquito breeding areas is the salt lakes at Torrevieja & La Mata and the surrounding salt marshes. In the past, an aircraft has been used on occasions to spray the surrounding areas of the lake to try and keep these annoying insects under control. Now the job of mosquito and rat removal falls to La Compañía de Tratamientos de Levante (CTL), who now spray the relevant areas using hand-held machines, see photo. This service costs Torrevieja €5,000 per annum.



Contrary to popular opinion, the summer is not the worst time for mosquito bites. In October 2009, following heavy rainfalls, a particularly nasty infestation of the blighters caused 300 badly bitten locals to report to the local *saluds* and emergency departments. Some were so severe they had to be admitted to hospital. It is after rainfall that we (and our pets) are most susceptible to them.

But there is now a new villain out there - the Asian tiger mosquito. This pest, which can be identified by the black and white stripes in its body, has already invaded large parts of Italy, Spain, southern France and the Balkans, as well as establishing itself as far north as The Netherlands, possibly as a result of the international trade in ornamental house plants. Not only does the tiger mosquito give painful bites, often developing into the size of a golf ball, they have also caused several outbreaks of mosquito-borne infections such as dengue fever and chikungunya fever. They are also responsible for infecting dogs and cats with heartworm.

The CTL exterminators now plan to introduce ten bat houses to the salt lake areas. Bats have been used for this purpose in many countries and are very effective in reducing the mosquito pest. A single bat can eat up to 600 mosquitos in just one hour! But just because the summer is over, don't think you have escaped the mozzies. After the first rainfall, they will begin to breed again.

(You can read more on this in Spanish here - <http://www.diarioinformacion.com/vega-baja/2012/09/20/combati-mosquitos-murcielagos-viviran-10-cajas-refugio/1295964.html>)

Quick Thinking

A wife is in bed with her lover when they hear hubby coming up the stairs. There's no time to get dressed. The man runs to hide in the en-suite bathroom while the wife pushes his clothes under the bed. The husband bursts through the bedroom door and asks, 'What are you doing naked in bed?' 'Darling,' she replies, 'I heard you coming and wanted to surprise you.' 'Great,' says her husband. 'I'll just nip into the bathroom to clean up.' The husband goes into the bathroom and is astonished to find a naked man in there, clapping his hands together in mid-air. 'Who the devil are you?' he asks. 'I'm from the exterminator company,' he says. 'Your wife called me in to get rid of these pesky moths.'

'But you've got no clothes on!' yelled the husband.

The man looks down at his body, jumps backwards in surprise and shouts, 'What? The little bastards!'



A Valencian agency is now offering courses in professional prostitution. The courses were stopped temporarily in July as the courts tried to find out if the law was being broken by these activities. The court finally ruled that no law was being broken, and the unnamed 'educator' (see photo) was allowed to recommence the courses.



The course, which lasts one week, costs €100. Just two hours a day with both practical and theoretical tuition; and with flexible hours offered to students, whether they be men or women. There is also the promise of a job at the end of the course.

So the next time you are passing one of the 'working-girls' at the roundabouts, ask to see their diplomas or qualifications! Either way, I would say you would receive a big surprise!



Health Care Stat's.

The Health Department of Torrevieja treated 46,085 patients in their emergency services during the period of June 15 to August 31, according to Government sources. Of these a total of 23,392 cases were treated (more than 50%) who were patients from other health areas, regions and from abroad. The emergency department of Torrevieja Hospital dealt with 42.30% of the total attendance of the area, with a daily average of 250 patients. The remaining 57.70% of cases were resolved at different points within the area by the Continuous Care Department. An analysis of total emergency care shows that about 68.98% of the patients were born in Spanish territory, 6.57% the UK, 2.38% from Morocco, followed by 1.18% of German patients.

The Valencian public health system has been graded as 6.54 out of 10, the best score for the last decade, according to the results of the Health Barometer 2011 published by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

This survey, based on interviews with 884 adults in Valencia, also reveals that 7 out of 10 citizens of Valencia are satisfied or very satisfied with the public health system and 72.85% believe that this works well or fairly okay.

Fear of Flying?

• A passenger jet was travelling through a severe thunderstorm. The passengers were being bounced around by the turbulence. A young woman turned to a priest sitting next to her and, with a nervous laugh, asked, 'Father, you're a man of God, can't you do something about this storm?'

To which he replied, 'Lady, I'm in sales, not management.'

• Airline hostesses show you how to use a seat belt in case you haven't been in a car since 1965. Jerry Seinfeld.

• Overly chatty airline captains are one of air travel's annoyances. But as a young pilot I often flew beside one captain, a taciturn Yorkshireman, who had perfected his passenger address, reducing it to slightly less than two words. In the middle of the flight he would announce to the cabin: "alf way."



Spain ups ante on Gibraltar

Spain is planning to create a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of 26,641.82 hectares around Gibraltar that will include waters in dispute between both governments. This zone will, if it becomes law, prohibit environmentally dangerous practices like 'bunkering' (ship refuelling at floating gas pumps), which is a major economic activity and income source for Gibraltar.

Spain denied any connection between this decision and an ongoing spat with Gibraltar over fishing rights in part of the bay.

"It can't bother anyone to see EU legislation applied to protect the environment," said a Spanish government source. But this is not likely to be Gibraltar's reaction.

After reaching a deal with Spanish fishermen to let them work near The Rock until year's end, the government of Fabian Picardo announced on August 16 that net fishing would be forbidden, based on an expert report warning about over-fishing. Since then, incidents between Gibraltar police and Spanish fishermen, who are protected by the Civil Guard, have been frequent.



Gibraltar celebrated its National Day on September 9. The Gibraltar First Minister, Fabián Picard (photo) said, 'Gibraltar will never give up a grain of sand, a breeze of air, or a drop of our waters, not a drop!'

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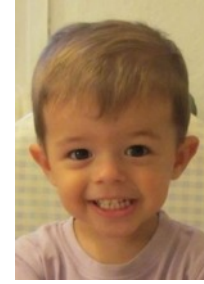
A Talking Dog?

A man goes and buys a talking dog from a bankrupt circus. After talking to the dog at home he takes it down the pub. 'I bet everyone here €10 that this dog can talk.' A number of people take the bet, but the dog remains silent and the man is forced to pay up. Puzzled he takes the dog home where it starts chatting away again. Next day the man returns to the pub and bets everyone €10 that the dog can talk. To the man's astonishment, the dog clams up. Not a word!

After paying his bets the man takes the dog outside and says, 'Why don't you talk? You are costing me a fortune!' 'Wise up,' says the dog. 'Think of the odds we'll get tomorrow.'



The Tragic Tale of Ruth and José.



On October 8, 2011, José Bretón reported that his two children, Ruth and José - age six and two - were missing. José, who was separated from his wife and had the children every other weekend, told the police that he had taken the two children to el parque Cruz Conde in Córdoba and the children had simply disappeared. This triggered a massive search.

The next day, October 9, the infants' mother, Ruth Ortiz (photoleft), lodged a complaint at the Huelva provincial police station accusing her estranged husband of psychological abuse, insults and harassment. The children had disappeared 23 days after Ruth told José that she was leaving him.



Then on October 10, the police searched the farm belonging to the paternal grandparents in Las Quemadillas, Cordoba, Andalucia. The childrens' father was known to have worked there regularly. Here the remains of a bonfire were discovered, not unusual in an orchard, and bones found in the ashes were declared by the police forensic team to be animal not human, and possibly that of rodents.

A knife and duct tape was also found in the fathers car. A massive search was organised and the Guadalquivir River was also searched by police divers. The father, José Bretón, was then arrested by the police on October 18 as the main suspect; it seems no witnesses had seen the children in the park.

José could be described as a bit of an odd-ball and a weasel. Short and thin, he has a fussy and obsessive nature. If the children got their hands dirty or if they coughed, sniffed or made noises while they ate, he would get upset. Indeed the police reported that he expressed no sadness nor pain after the disappearance of the children. He never held a stable occupation, working as a driver, a construction worker but mainly worked in his parents property in Las Quemadillas. His own wife described him once in a letter as 'pathologically jealous, envious, obsessive, sexist, intolerant, not at all understanding; he is not affectionate, he is not thoughtful; he does not make nice gestures to others, he clearly perceives the weaknesses in other people and then highlights them.' (I suppose it would be fair to ask what she saw in him in the first place to cause her to marry him?)

During December, the police searched wells and sewers in Cordoba and also asked for assistance from Interpol. The police once again searched the Guadalquivir in January 2012. There were also a number of public demonstrations (photo) in support of the children. Many of the demonstrations were attended by their mother Ruth, which left no doubt that she viewed the father, José, as the guilty party.



With the upsurge of public opinion against José, he decided to 'harm' himself in prison with a razor blade on January 30, 2012. However, the medical staff stated that the wounds to his arm and shoulder 'were not too deep and not serious', in short, a half-hearted attempt. (During a 'suicide watch' in Spanish prisons, it is generally conducted by two prison trustees not the warders.) Police continued to search farms in the Cordoba area and carried out 15 reconstructions of the detailed movements José Bretón said he took while taking his kids to the Cruz Conde park. The police used the father's vehicle and two similar children to help with the re-enactments and discrepancies soon began to emerge in José's story; also there were still no public witnesses who saw the father or the children at the park on the date the infants went missing.



José (photo) then stated that he was key to finding the children and hinted in August 2012 that the children were being cared for. He also said that if he was released from prison 'the children would reappear in days.' However in late August this year, Ruth's parental family commissioned a private forensic report on the bones previously found in the grandparents' farm: this new report stated that the bone fragments and teeth were **definitely human!** The police, facing public criticism for gross incompetence, then commissioned a third forensic report, this time by the Anthropology Department of the Complutense University in Madrid. This time it was confirmed that the bones were indeed human! They also declared that the characteristics of the bones indicate that they belonged to a six year old child and another of two or three years but thought it was unlikely that DNA might be recovered.

On September 5 this year, the judge charged José Bretón with two counts of pre-meditated murder. The tragedy then descended into a farce when the accused decided to go on hunger-strike a day later. His hunger strike lasted one day! He was discovered drinking milk in the prison breakfast-room and prison guards discovered a pack of chocolate-chip cookies and a pack of 'Christmas treats' in his cell. His lawyer told him to stop this 'nonsense' and told the press that it would be very difficult to find an impartial jury at this stage. More on this story as it develops.

The Fireman's Bells.

A fireman says to his wife, 'We have a new system at the station; bell one rings and we all put on our jackets. Bell two rings and we all slide down the pole. And when bell three rings we're on the fire truck ready to go. From now on when I say "bell one", I want you to strip naked. When I say "bell two", I want you to jump into bed. And when I say "bell three", we are going to make love all night.'

The next night he come home and yells, 'bell one!' His wife takes all her clothes off. Then he yells, 'bell two.' She promptly jumps into bed. He then yells 'bell three' and they begin to make love.

After a few moments the wife yells, 'Bell four! Bell four!' 'What the hell is "bell four," asks the husband.

"Roll out more hose," she yells. 'You're nowhere near the fire!'

I usually start to compile the monthly edition of The Dream Scene during the first week of the previous month. At this stage I have usually researched the contents of the history article and then ‘polish it’ during the last few days of the month. However, living in Spain can be considered ‘dynamic’ with an ever-changing regulatory and bureaucratic environment as well as a political one. Consequently, as the month progresses, pages and pages I have already compiled are discarded to incorporate new information that primarily effects the expat. Although researching the history of Spain is one of my favourite pastimes, unfortunately the promised final article is often shelved to accommodate more pressing or more up to date news or information. So apologies once again for omitting the history article this month, this time due to immediate events concerning the Catalan independence movement which could contribute to a fractious winter.

My three favourite Spanish publications are *El Pais*, politically centre-left, *El Mundo*, politically centre-right, and particularly for local political events in Alicante, *Informacion*, which is left-wing. The Catalan nationalists have long been a thorn in the side of the Spanish establishment. Over the years, various national minority governments were forced to make deals with the Catalans to maintain power. These often proved expensive to the then central governments, not only in terms of funds gifted to the region but also in increases in autonomy awarded to it. Popular outrage and resentment in Catalonia against the cut-backs imposed by central government have now once again fanned the flame of independence there and the political chiefs in that region are quick to take advantage of it.

On September 24, the following article appeared in *El Pais*, written by Miguel Noguer under the heading -

Mas throws down the gauntlet in pursuit of “national transition”.

Catalonia premier Artur Mas, photo, set his ruling CiU nationalist coalition on a collision course with Madrid on Monday when he announced that a right-to-decide resolution will be submitted to the regional assembly with a view to having it approved on Thursday. The center-right CiU will seek support for a resolution which concludes that attempts to “fit Spain and Catalonia together” are “a path without direction.” The text asks that “the people of Catalonia be allowed to freely and democratically decide their collective future.”



Although the document does not specifically mention independence, it does emphasize the need for Catalonia to bring about its “national transition.”

The regional assembly will begin to mull the resolution on Tuesday after Mas opens the General Policy debate. The parties that backed a pro-sovereignty march attended by hundreds of thousands of people on Catalonia Day — which account for 83 of the assembly’s 135 deputies — participated in drawing up the text.

Meanwhile, leading figures of the Popular Party (PP) united in condemnation of Socialist leader Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba’s stated willingness to study a shift to a federal state, which he described as an “improvement on the model of autonomous regions.” PP secretary general María Dolores de Cospedal called the idea “extreme irresponsibility,” and called on Rubalcaba to explain precisely what he is proposing. “If they want to break the Constitution they will find the PP in their way,” she warned. Of Mas’s threat to call early elections in Catalonia, Cospedal said that such a move would demonstrate his “political and economic failure” as the head of CiU.*

The Association of Spanish Military Personnel also weighed in with a stark statement warning that anyone who contributes to the fracturing of the Spanish state should answer to military justice for the “serious charge of high treason.” - *El Pais*.

* On September 25, the day after the date of this article, Premier Mas scheduled Catalan regional elections for November 25. The Catalans have also asked for an emergency loan of €5 billion from Madrid so it can settle its debts which are maturing this year.

Zenia Boulevard

I was fortunate enough to get a couple of tickets for the inauguration ceremony of the new local shopping centre, Zenia Boulevard for the evening of Sept’ 25. Along with around 2,000 others we enjoyed an excellent evening of Spanish hospitality. This included free food, drinks and top class entertainment.

The centre has a massive footprint and after you park in the enormous underground car park - which could easily swallow up several football fields - you come up into the centre of the Boulevard via escalators or the single lift. The centre is formed like a town square with fountains and the individual shops are arranged around the ‘square’ but there are also streets leading off this with additional stores/shops, like a retail village. As well as the ground floor, there are also shops on the first floor which also includes an incredibly large children’s play area.

Similar to the Habaneras Centre in Torrevieja, most of the public walking areas have no roof covering, so if it rains you will get wet! All the larger stores and the casino are situated on the outer periphery of the development with plenty of additional external car parking spaces, one of them municipal (no charge). From what I could see most of the units have now been taken-up, although a handful, including Media Markt, haven’t opened yet. All in all it was very impressive.

The photos on the right show the opening ceremony and some of the acrobats dancing through the fountains.



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Heaven & Hell

A Yorkshire man reached the Pearly Gates and gave one of those sniffs they use in parts of Yorkshire as a form of social comment.

'From Yorkshire, eh?' said the Recording Angel, unlocking the gates wearily. 'Well you can come in, but you won't like it.'

- John Sandilands

In Hell the auto mechanics have to drive the cars they 'fixed' on earth.

- Peter Kreeft

Welcome to hell. Here's your accordion.

- Gary Larson cartoon

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

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Patricia (Patsy) Andrews. R.I.P.
Arthur Andrews would like to thank all those who sent condolences, offers of assistance and floral tributes following the sad departure of his beloved Pat in the UK in September. Pat was a lovely lady and her tragic loss will not only be felt by family and relations but also by all who came into contact with her.
The burial service will take place in the UK on October 1.

Life's Imponderables.....

Occasional tables - what are they the rest of the time?

Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?

Whose cruel idea was it to put an 's' in the word 'lisp'?

Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavour, and dishwashing liquid made with real lemons?

Before they invented drawing boards, what did they go back to?

Why, when a child is running, does a mother say, 'Don't come running to me if you break your leg'?

Since light travels faster than sound, is that why some people appear bright until you hear them speak?

When your pet canary sees you reading the newspaper, does he think you're just sitting there, staring at carpeting?

Aren't the 'good things that come to those who wait' just the leftovers from the people that got there first?

You can find archived copies of The Dream Scene together with lots of helpful info, at Pat Farnaby's website - <http://www.heddon.co.uk/dhills/>

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