

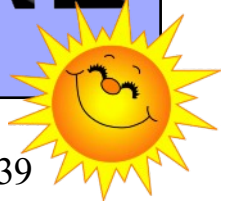
THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER



Helping to keep expat's informed.....and smiling.

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the February, 2019 edition. Issue No.139



Well it has been two months since the last newsletter and a lot has been happening during the holiday period.

The most dramatic political news here in Spain has been the regional elections in Andalucia. Here the socialists have been kicked out after 37 years in power. The new regional government there is now a mix of the conservative Partido Popular and the liberal Ciudadanos with the right-wing Vox party supporting them against the Left. More on this inside. But it has been the success of the far-right Vox party in those elections which shocked and surprised not only the media and polls but has acted as a 'wake-up call' to the traditional political parties. Read about it on page 4.

The other main dramatic but also tragic news has been the search for a two-year-old boy, Julen, who fell down a 110-metre-deep borehole on January 13, while playing on the land of a relative in Totalán, Málaga. The country held its breath as miners and rescue teams - 300 people in all - worked for 13 days in difficult terrain to locate the boy. His lifeless body was finally found on Saturday, January 26. Unfortunately this was the second tragic event for the family as their other son, a three year-old, died unexpectedly of a heart attack during 2017, while the family was walking along a local beach.

The Brexit mess in the UK continues to dumbfound with the ineptitude, wishful thinking and plain stupidity of the politicians there. Despite little if any good news or reassurance coming from Downing Street, more comforting noises are coming from the Spanish government. See page 25 & 39.

There have been some major changes in the Spanish rental market. While tourist rentals in many areas are probably keeping ordinary rental rates high, the government is trying to introduce new controls. More details on page 29.

The hardworking and effective charity, HELP Vega Baja is looking for volunteers - check page 38. They have also launched 'Meeting Places' with their trained listeners - The Connection Team - take a look at page 3. Please help out.

We will be starting a new year of The Dream Scene with the March issue. Despite keeping the advertising rates cheap and at the same price since March 2007, non-payment by some advertisers is now becoming a bit of a headache. Maybe it's time to 'name & shame'!

Many thanks to Judy & Terry for renewing their sub together with their kind donation towards printing costs.

Don't forget, St. Valentine's Day Feb' 14.

Have a wonderful month,
Mick, Tid and the Dream Scene Team

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Patrick O'Keefe, on guests who outstay their welcome.

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See Notice Boards & Facebook Page



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GREAT ENTERTAINMENT NIGHTS!

With two dart boards, pool table, we are now inviting new pool and dart teams. We can also accommodate a new golf society.

HELP Vega Baja CONNECTIONS TEAM

(registered charity)

“MEETING PLACES”

The Connections Team are trained listeners who offer a 24 hour, confidential emotional support helpline on **965 021 552**. Members of the team are also available to meet you in person at the following venues:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Monday | - | HELP Vega Baja San Miguel Centre (2 – 5 pm) |
| Tuesday | - | Cruz Roja Social Centre, La Marina, Calle Berna (10.30 – 1.00) |
| Wednesday | - | HELP Vega Baja San Miguel Centre (2 – 5 pm) |
| Thursday | - | Hope Christian Fellowship Church, La Marina (10–1.30 pm) opposite Market site |
| Friday | - | A.E.C.C. office, lower floor, Playa Flamenca Commercial Centre (10 – 1.30 pm) |



Don't struggle alone – the Connections Team are trained listeners who as part of HELP Vega Baja registered charity can offer both emotional and practical support, where it is needed. Come along to one of our meeting places and have a chat and a cuppa, call our helpline or simply email the team at support@helpvegabaja.com

The Connections Team are part of HELP Vega Baja (registered charity) that has been helping people in the community for over 36 years.....

What's Up?

As it is now two months since the last Dream Scene, it is worth reviewing the main political events in Spain during that period. Try not to fall asleep!

The main news, and it has been quite dramatic, was the **regional election in Andalucía** on December 2. Here the socialist PSOE reigned for the 37 years since Spain returned to democracy after the Franco era. Encouraged by a number of polls which indicated an increase in voting for the socialists nationally, the socialist president of the region Susana Díaz, photo, decided to call an early regional election



for early December. It was a disastrous decision for the socialists who, having expected to win lost 14 seats to give them just 33 seats, well short of a majority 55. The right of centre PP lost seven seats to win just 26.

The parties which upset the political apple cart were the liberal Ciudadanos (Citizens) Party who went from 9 to 21 seats, Adelante Andalucía - a local variant of the far-left Podemos Party, who secured 17 seats and **Vox**, a far-right party which took 12 seats. After the shock defeat of the ruling PSOE, the emergence of Vox in what was traditionally a socialist region, was a major surprise. Having never gained a seat in any region, they now secured 391,000 votes as against 18,000 in 2015. Their 12 seats have now allowed the PP with 26 seats, the 21 of Ciudadanos to form a majority. The PP have selected their regional president and will now rule the region with the assistance of Ciudadanos.

However, Ciudadanos will not speak to the Vox party as they consider them to be too extreme, so it will be interesting to see how long the new government and relationship will last.

Vox's surprise gains in the region has now encouraged the party to put forward candidates for the upcoming regional and municipal elections this May. This could be bad news for the conservative PP nationally as many voters on the right will drift towards Vox. More on Vox and its policies in the next issue of the newsletter.



'Tourism flats in Marbella are the 4th most expensive in the world' – according to a new study by the University of Málaga, placing Marbella only behind New York, London and Barcelona. The high rental rates for tourist accommodation nationally is pushing all rental rates upwards.

It is now 12 years since Spain's anti-smoking legislation was introduced. However, there are now **more smokers** in the country than before the legislation was introduced.

The supermarket chain **Mercadona** is 'testing the waters' in Portugal. The Portuguese project will start this summer with the opening of the first of four stores planned in Porto. They continue to be Spain's most successful supermarket.

Now looking at the national government, PM Sanchez's socialists only have 84 lawmakers out of 350 and in order to pass the **national budgets for 2019**, need the support of a far-left coalition led by Podemos - 67 seats - as well as other lawmakers, the most crucial being the 17 Catalan separatists. His problem is that when you do a deal or deals with the devil it carries a price. Podemos have a string of requirements they have submitted for action, although Sanchez's government haven't acted on even one. Although the PM has now pumped more money into Catalonia than in any previous years, the Catalan separatists want more, including the release of the jailed separatists. If Sanchez decides to interfere with the courts, nationally it would be political suicide. As with other socialists, he was surprised with the results from the regional elections in Andalucía and any hopes he had of calling a snap general election were dashed. He will now probably just run his term until the end of 2019. First votes on the proposed budgets are due mid-February.

Spain's audit office on Monday ordered former separatist Catalan president Artur Mas and nine others to **repay €4.9 million** of public money spent on staging a 2014 illegal independence referendum. I guess all their assets are in the wife's name by now!

Okay, enough politics! Although the warmer climate in Spain is wonderful for fruit and veg' growing, unfortunately the pests and parasites also thrive in hot weather. The destructive **almond wasp** has decimated almond groves in parts of Castilla-La Mancha and the Community of Valencia. The wasp has now been detected in two groves in nearby Jumilla and Yecla in Murcia. Almond growers in that province have now been warned that if they do not burn the wasp-infected trees, they will face fines of up to €120,000.

Forty-seven women have been **killed by their partner or ex-partner** in Spain during 2018. Although still an unbearable figure it is the lowest since the official statistics of sexist violence began. In the last fifteen years 975 women have died at the hands of their partners or ex-partners. Staggering!

A three-year-old boy choked on a grape in Gijón trying to eat 12 grapes to the sound of the 12 chimes at midnight on New Year's Eve. Tragic.



What's Up? continued

So, let's set the scene! It's 3:00am in this bar in Oviedo in early December, where this 25-year-old **would-be Romeo** decides to chat up this young lady. She doesn't respond favourably to him so he gives her a violent push. Big mistake! Five female friends of the young lady pounce on the assailant and proceed to beat the shit out of him - using fists, a glass of cider, a bottle of beer, chairs and pepper sprays. Fortunately for this now heavily bleeding idiot whose white t-shirt had now also turned burgundy, some off-duty local police managed to rescue him by dragging him from the melee and load him into an ambulance. Later, he received several staples to tie up the worst wounds in his head. Recovery to his wounds will take some weeks, but to his self esteem - probably years!

Two men, aged 56 and 37, both of Moroccan nationality, were arrested by the Guardia Civil in Murcia. It is believed that **they stole 115 cars** in Murcia, Mula, Caravaca de la Cruz, Cartagena, Fuente Alamo, San Javier and the Alicante towns of Orihuela, Cox, Bigastro, Crevillent and Catral. The thieves specialized in stealing older models, the Peugeot 205 and the Citroën C-15, with the same engine and transmission system, which are highly valued in the black market of their country and Mauritania. They hid them in industrial warehouses in Crevillente and Catral before smuggling the parts via the Algeciras ferry to Morocco.

Public prosecutor in Spain has accused Shakira, a pop singer of €14.5 million **tax fraud**. The Colombian singer allegedly feigned residency in the Bahamas despite residing in Catalonia most of the year. After Messi was fined and given a suspended jail sentence last year, Cristiano Ronaldo, footballer or soccer player as we Irish call 'em, has been given a 23-month jail sentence and an €18.8 million fine after reaching a deal with the public prosecutor and the Tax Agency, having admitted committing four tax offences between the years of 2011 and 2014. Being two year or less, the sentence will not usually be served. One must question the wisdom of the advisors to some of these people, or maybe they are just too greedy!

Whereas there is a steady influx of **illegal immigrants** from North Africa to the southern coast of Spain, the country's enclaves in North Africa have a continuing



invasion from sub-Saharan. Hidden under car seats or within the engines of cars, these methods are regularly used to try and enter either Cueta or Melilla. This is a photo of one of two would-be immigrants who tried to enter Melilla hidden in mattresses.

The Spanish government has announced plans to fight the rise of "alternative medicine" and pseudo-therapies (including **homeopathy and acupuncture**) that they say have no basis in science. It says it wants to "eliminate" such therapies from health centres, and prohibit universities from including any element of them in degree courses. Under the proposed rules, anyone who is given the treatments must be told they do not work!

According to a 2016 poll, 50% of people in Spain believe that homeopathic products work, and they are widely sold in pharmacies and are often expensive. Doctors have been pressing for reforms since a series of widely publicised deaths. In one case, a 21-year-old man died after ending his hospital treatment for leukaemia in favour of a treatment by a "naturopath", who told him he could be cured with vitamins. Unfortunately cases like this are not uncommon. Ignorance is a major problem. Staff in so-called 'health-stores' will hide their quackery behind white coats.

Take a look at these photos of a mist around the Benidorm area on the Poniente beach during December. Reminds me of the movie 'The Fog.' **Spooky!**



How much do you know about the Spanish Constitution? If you live here it is only right that you should take an interest in some things '**Spanish**' and not just the wine! Test your knowledge with this quiz taken from some the questions that appear in the citizenship test.

https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/12/06/inenglish/1544093415_371795.html

The questions are marked automatically as you progress.

Our new computer system is about as much use as a cat flap in a submarine.

Unidentified Employee at Tory HQ

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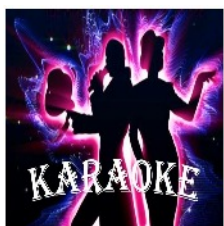


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Fancy a Ride?

Whenever I see Spanish funfairs, it is usually with a sharp intake of breath. After one views the funfair rides in say Disney World, Busch Gardens or Universal Studios, the local funfair parks here in the areas of Santa Pola and Alicante seem weak, rickety and downright dangerous. (I do not include the rides in Terra Mitica among these.) I recall reports of a fatality some years ago on a



ride at Santa Pola and on the evening of January 12, there was a nasty accident at a funfair in Alicante.

While in the Torrente 5 attraction at the fair in Alicante (photo), a four-year-old boy got his foot trapped in a metal trapdoor. A group of four people, including his parents, couldn't free the young boy's foot and it was not until someone brought a screwdriver that the child's foot was released from the metal plate. Unfortunately, several of his toes were practically severed. There was an ambulance parked outside the attraction but those in the vehicle said they couldn't start the ambulance and take the child to the hospital. The father then took the child to the Alicante General Hospital in his own car. Because of the severity of the injuries to the child's toes, he was then taken to the Hospital de Manises where, during a four-hour operation, a team of doctors had to reconstruct several veins as well as the tendons.

The attraction, which was sealed by the National Police on the night of the incident, was reopened to the public less than 24 hours later.



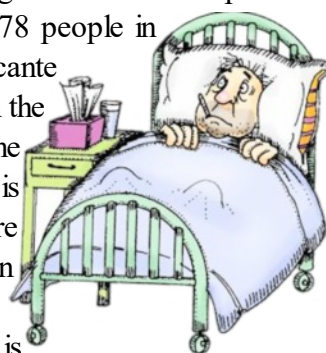
(Submitted by Woody)

The Failure of The Dependency Law.

There is no 'welfare state' in Spain. Any assistance which is available for physically or mentally challenged people or for old people is supposed to be covered by the Law of Dependency.

The waiting list to collect any of the allowances and benefits authorised within the Law of Dependency (Ley de Dependencia) for Alicante increased by almost a thousand people between June and early November 2018. The Department of Equality attribute the backlog to the inability of the various municipalities to process applications. "We are passing surveys to all the municipalities because we know that there are many municipalities that have a huge jam of files because there is a lack of staff," says Paloma Cascales, lawyer for the Platform for the Defence of the Alicante Dependency Law. Cascales also attributes this situation to the high number of applications submitted to be a beneficiary of the law. During November, there have been almost 750 applications filed in the province, the highest figure since June.

Currently, according to figures from the Department of Equality, there are 7,678 people in the province of Alicante waiting for some aid from the law. At the same time, the number of beneficiaries is 22,481, the highest figure since counting started in 2015.



Nationally the backlog is immense. More than 7,000 applicants have died before their case was assessed. This is because the evaluation by the social workers at the local authorities takes so long. It is undoubtedly true that too much is expected of them, but when it was recently reported that it takes two years for an autistic child to receive their degree of assessment, the situation is clearly intolerable.

The former prime minister, Rajoy, described the Dependency Law as an 'absolute failure.' Whereas most agree with that, no one is prepared to jump in the ring and change it to meet the demands and requirements of modern Spain.

My wife, Tid, applied for a disability car sticker to park in the reserved blue spaces. It took seven meetings/interviews/appointments, a medical examination in Alicante and 18 months to get the sticker. Living in Spain teaches patience! Saying that, I've just renewed my Spanish driving licence in two weeks! Hallelujah!

THE BAR NEXT DOOR.

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3rd ANITA WINKLEY 32pts(CB)



NEAREST THE PIN
HOLE 3 BUD BUTLER
HOLE 5 JOE McALEER
HOLE 9 IAN GRANT
HOLE 11 IAN GRANT
HOLE 15 JOE McALEER
HOLE 17 IAN GRANT



A special congratulations to IAN GRANT who carded the Society's very first ever Hole in One on the 17th, well done Ian. Everyone returned to the Lime Bar for presentation and refreshments.

A nice touch on the food this month with Pie & Chips enjoyed by all. Thanks Carley and Sue. Thanks also to the ladies for the football sweep.

Eddie Allan



**THATCHERS
CIDER**

LIME BAR



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We have in previous issues commented on problems the Policia Local have in being properly funded by the Orihuela and Torrevieja local councils. This neglect now seems to have spread to the Local Police in Callosa de Segura. In the past, the police here had to purchase their own **bullet-proof vests** for several years. The socialist councillor responsible says that the council will now subsidise part of the purchase of these vests, which can cost around €900 each. If a local policeman/woman now wants one they will have to pay around €100. Unfortunately, the complaints of lack of resources, poor equipment and understaffing is now happening in dozens of municipalities throughout the province.

Local Police are now using a **drone** in the Benidorm area to search for illegal immigrants disembarking from boats. 11 were detained during one operation in December.

In 1998, the then PP mayor of Orihuela, José Manuel



Medina, **generously granted the concession of a 75-year lease** at only €2,700 p.a. to a developer Domingo Alcocer, owner of Doalco, for the

operation of a new underground car parking facility in Orihuela. Over two decades the municipality has been ruled by three PP councils and one Socialist/Green Party. But during March last year, Cambiemos Orihuela (Change Orihuela) - a small opposition party, pointed out that the car parking facility never paid any IBI - the local property tax, for 20 years! After many excuses and much fumbling, the current council announced that the concessionaire will only have to pay the IBI for four years - €52,000, that's €13,000 per year, but will be **'forgiven' the charge of €208,000** for the other 16 years as the council cannot enforce it.

Orihuela City Council have had to compensate a 64-year-old woman with €6,075.71. The woman was leaving a football match in the municipal stadium of Los Arcos in Orihuela when **she tripped outside the ground** and suffered a bruise to her knee. Bad street lighting was blamed. The event occurred in October 2015 and although she was released without hospitalisation from the Vega Baja Hospital, she claimed the injury forced her to be disabled for 50 days and another 70 days of 'convalescing.'

Corvera Airport has finally opened in Murcia, with King Felipe doing the honours in early January. The first aircraft to land was operated by Ryanair, coming from East Midlands. Up to the end of March, flights to and from the airport will be offered by Ryanair, Easyjet and TUI. Summer flights, if they are already organised, are difficult to check. More on the Corvera routes as they are announced. It is now 10 years since the local land was expropriated. Unfortunately, the nearer airport at **San Javier is now closed.**

The Christmas period in Spain extends from Christmas Eve (a big family night for the Spanish) right up to the Three Kings on January 6.



One of the Three Kings in Orihuela went a bit crazy with the eye makeup. I thought he looked a bit like a **'zombie'**

and yes, I have seen plenty of 'zombies' locally, particularly after the local bars have closed!

When you check out these photos, you can understand if the kids still have nightmares.



Christmas Day saw the usual influx of expats to the beach at **La Zenia**. This year thousands, possibly as many as 8,000, many wearing red Santa hats packed the area. It was so crowded I thought the actual overall image was horrific. It looked more like a mob than a celebration. No thanks!

The long promised **Emergency Centre** for Orihuela Costa has been delayed further. What is delaying it now are bureaucratic routines and differences on the funding between the local council and the regional authorities. It seems that €2.2 million is available for the project but I think this is wholly inadequate for such a development.

Earlier building works were halted in December 2012 when the builder 'went bust', photo. The supposed new end-date for completion by end 2020 will not now be met.



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EL CAPTAN

Lago Jardin II.

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Every Friday

-Fun Darts at 8pm.

Every Sunday

Quiz Night 8:30pm.



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THE PHOENIX GOLF SOCIETY – January 2019

We played at EL PLANTIO on Sunday, 20th January, the weather was kind to us and kept dry all day and the course was in a good condition and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Nearest the Pins were won by:

Pat Brenham

Brian Watson

The overall winner was:

BRIAN WATSON

The "twos" competition was won by IAN GRANT.

Many thanks to Julie of JESSIES BAR for the great food served at the bar.

Dave Wightman



Bloke walks into a pub and sees three men and a dog playing poker.

Bloke says, 'He must be a clever dog'.

The barman answers, 'Not really, whenever he gets a good hand, he wags his tail'.

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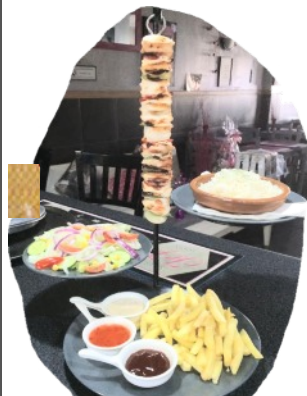
VIA PARK V.

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Chicken Madras with Rice & Chips,
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The Catalan Gravy Train.

The extensive public sector of the Catalan Generalitat employs more than 245,000 people . They represent 9% of the total salaried workers in Catalonia. In round numbers, therefore, in this region one in every ten active workers is on the payroll of the Autonomous Administration . The Catalan Government already spends more than 7,500 million euros per year in salaries- seven and a half billion euros!

The average cost of an employee of the Generalitat is around 44,000 euros per year, which includes gross salary and Social Security contributions. And this is only counting the employees that are in the Administration proper - including Health and Education. Added to this are thousands of contracted workers in a type of "parallel administration" that make up public companies and other entities controlled and funded by the Generalitat.



According to the latest wage studies of the National Institute of Statistics (INE), a public employee charges in Catalonia, on average, 39% more than salaried employees of private companies. The average annual gross salary of Catalan public employees is around € 31,500 per year -without counting Social Security contributions to be paid to the Administration that has hired them. In the Catalan private sector, the average gross salary barely reaches 22,700 euros per year.

In the regional ranking, Extremadura is the community with the greatest weight of public employment over the total. The workers who reside in Extremadura and are on the payroll of the State, the Board or the local administration reach 88,886 - 28.6% of the total salaried employees. It is followed by Castilla y León (23.1%), Castilla-La Mancha (22.4%) and Asturias (20.2%).

On the opposite side, Catalonia stands out, where only 11% of salaried employees are in the public sector.

25.5% of workers in Extremadura are civil servants, followed by Andalusia, Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha and Aragón, which have between 16 and 20% of public employees over their total. Catalonia has the lowest percentage, only 10%.

Translated from the Spanish -

https://www.abc.es/espana/abci-generalitat-tiene-nomina-cada-diez-trabajadores-cataluna-201811300357_noticia.html



Gis a Job!

A young, tattooed man with long hair, hoodie, baggy pants and several body piercing's walked into the local welfare office in Liverpool, marched straight up to the counter and said, "Hi, I'm lookin' for a job."

The man behind the counter replied, "Your timing is amazing. We've just got a listing from a very wealthy man who wants a chauffeur/bodyguard for his nympho daughter. You'll have to drive around in a big black Mercedes, but the suits, shirts, and ties are provided. Because of the long hours of this job, meals will also be provided and you will also be required to escort the young lady on her overseas holidays. The salary package is £100,000 a year."

The young man said, "Ah c'mon, you're bullshitting me!"

The man behind the counter said, "Well, you started it!"



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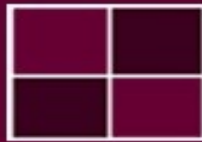
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January

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No regrets forget the past
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take each day as it lasts
and enjoy your leisure

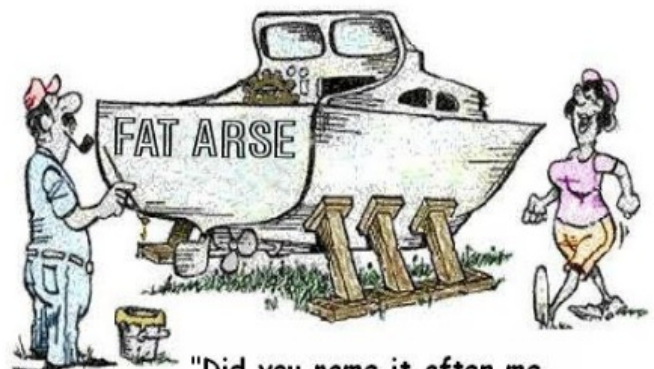
Use every day as a new adventure
and help some others too
you'll reap the benefits and take no
censure
with all the good you do

We have the sun and sea and life
with living on the Coast
let's use our time and cause no strife
and from living take the most

Never look too far ahead
enjoy life day to day
take the happy path instead
as the end's never far away

Good health and wealth and cheer
to all people far and wide
let us enjoy another year
with good luck on our side

The Phantom Poet



"Did you name it after me,
like you said you would?"

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Attendance Allowance is a benefit for people aged over 65 and who may need extra help to stay independent at home, due to an illness or disability.

You could get: £57.30 or £85.60 a week if you need help both in the day and at night.

Completing the lengthy form, you need to show that you need help at home or someone to keep an eye on you. This can include help such as getting out of bed, help to wash and dressed.

You don't need to have carers to help you but the money can help pay towards this.

The benefit is not means tested and does not affect your state pension or other income.

David, at Advocacy Costa Blanca is always happy to meet up for a chat. No charge.

If you would like support with the process, you can be assured there are no up front fees to pay.



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Attendance
Allowance



Thank you David Minto for all your help and advise.
David came to my home in Dec. and filled in all the forms
etc. my claim was turned down so David persuaded me to
appeal Last week I heard from the court and I have been
awarded the higher offer plus back dated from January.
David you are an ultimate professional so once again thank
you
RW, El Galan

David Minto gives the most excellent service. I was
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some financial help for my disability. One group
just passed me on with tel. nos to contact . David
was immediately on the case , visited my home,
filled in forms with the info. No stress for me . Yes
David charges a fee , you would expect that, but he
certainly works hard and expertly for it and could
easily be paid from the award I received. Would
recommend Advocacy Costa Blanca to anyone
needing help. GR-San Luis

Contact David on - 602465565 or 966392026.



- advocacycostablanca@outlook.com

Are you thinking about a return to the UK?

Are you aware of the Habitual Residence Test and Ordinary Residence?

Should you decide to return to the UK, it may be that you could have housing, social services and benefits declined because of Habitual Residency Test and Ordinary Residence.

David, at ACB, has been a UK social worker for eighteen years, many of these at a very senior level and is very accustomed to helping people access UK services on return.

For free advice and guidance regarding a return to the UK please don't hesitate to contact David at Advocacy Costa Blanca on 0034 602465565 or 966392026

Can you imagine what it would be like living in London if that bunch of precious, overpaid tossers win the World Cup?

John Humphrys, Broadcaster, on England's squad, 2002.



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Are you confused by the recent legislation changes?

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A woman went to the doctor's office where she was seen by one of the new doctors. After about 4 minutes in the examination room, she burst out screaming as she ran down the hall. An older doctor stopped her and asked what the problem was, and she told him her story. After listening, he had her sit down and relax in another room. The older doctor marched down the hallway to the back where the first doctor was and demanded, "What's the matter with you? Mrs. Terry is 63 years old, she has four grown children and seven grandchildren, and you told her she was pregnant?"



The new doctor continued to write on his clipboard and without looking up said, "Does she still have the hiccups?"

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Few of us get to read comments in the Spanish press concerning BREXIT. The following is a comment in the local Diario Informacion. Forgive the poor translation.

The English Battle - A Spanish Opinion

Many Britons still seem to be anchored in the Second World War, when Prime Minister Winston Churchill could only promise his compatriots "blood, sweat and tears." Anyone who has lived there for some time will not have been surprised that this town seems to be still fighting every day against Hitler. Especially if one attends to the covers of its sensationalist press.

It is enough, for example, that they face their national teams so that the patriotic spirit of the British bulldog resurge against the continental "Huns" and the battle of England seems to return.

Lost most of their colonies, the British, and especially the English, because the Scots seem to be in something else, continue to search for a new post-imperial identity.

And it is now the great opaque and bureaucratic monster of Brussels, which they consider completely dominated by Germany, the enemy from which we must break free as soon as possible.

The Irish journalist, Fintan O'Toole, recently recalled how

former British Minister of Industry and Commerce Nicholas Ridley gave an interview to the weekly "The Spectator" in which he described the European monetary system of "German deception to subdue the continent." "I am not in principle against doing away with our sovereignty, but not against that band," said Ridley, "because, to be honest, it would be like giving it to Adolf Hitler." (Ridley was forced to resign after making this comment in July 1990.)

Many years have passed, but the British people, or at least that half of them who voted in favour of leaving the EU, and continue to see their worst enemy in the central European country.

Shortly before the referendum on Brexit, one of its promoters, the mendacious and manipulative Boris Johnson, wrote about the process of European unity that was something that had already tried "Napoleon, Hitler and other people, and always ended in tragedy".

Now, of course, Berlin does not have to resort to arms to build that super-state that, according to the "Tory" politician it covets, because its economic power is enough.

For when are the rational economic arguments and calculations instead of the patriotic myths and the continuous recourse to the ghost of Adolf Hitler?

Joaquin Rabago 13.12.2018 | 04:15



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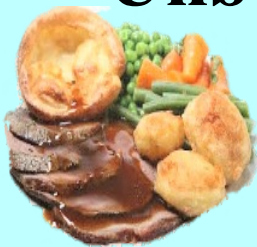
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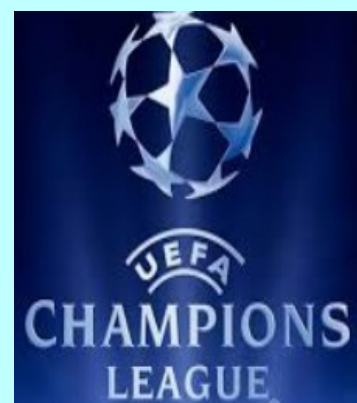
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A ladder was placed against the bedroom window of a burning house and a young fireman rushed up. Inside was a curvy brunette in a see-through nightie. "Aha," said he, "you're the second pregnant girl I've rescued this year!" "But I'm not pregnant." "You're not rescued yet," he replied.



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The Wake.

My grandmother died, and after the funeral, recovering from the innate vulgarity of the cremation service when the gramophone record stuck on 'Abi-abi-abi-abi-de with me', the whole family trooped home and discovered some crates of Australian burgundy under the stairs.

A rip roaring party ensued with laughter and singing and soon a lower middle busybody who lived next door came bustling over to see if anything was wrong.

Whereupon my father-in-law, holding a glass and seeing her coming up the path, uttered the immortal line: 'Who is this intruding on our grief?'

Jilly Cooper

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IMF Cautions Spain.

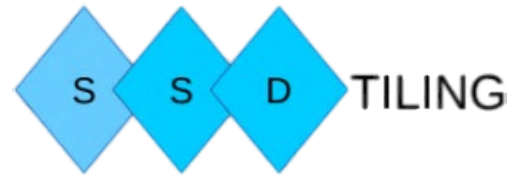
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is asking Spain to monitor the price of real estate following a rebound of the property market after years of crisis. After analysing late 2017 statistics, the global agency has detected early signs of "a slight overvaluation," although it stressed that there is still nothing like a new housing bubble in Spain.

The IMF finds that house prices increased by around 15% between 2014 and 2017, but that sales are being driven by existing housing stock rather than new housing. Another change from pre-crisis days is that the home ownership rate has dropped from 80% to 77% as people increasingly turn to the rental market.

Analysts are nevertheless concerned about the new upward trend of housing prices, which could lead to excessive trust and a relaxation of loan application requirements and building criteria. Additionally, household savings levels are at historic lows as homeowners believe themselves to be wealthier.

The IMF has been telling Spain for years to create an agency to monitor systemic risks, or in other words, to assess financial hazards in order to prevent imbalances and bubbles. And now that the property market is picking up speed again, there is an added sense of urgency.

I'm sweating like Donald Trump on Judgement Day. Anon

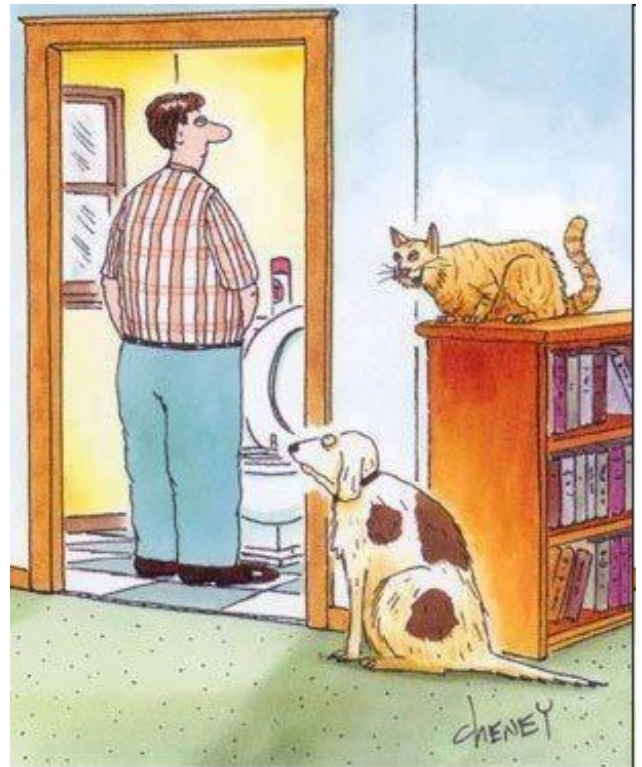


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"So, if you're his best friend, then why is he always peeing in your drinking water?"

CROOKS!**One Arm Bandits!**

Agents of the National Police have arrested two men in the Valencian town of Tavernes Blanques, as alleged perpetrators of 69 robberies in which they seized about 17,500 euros from recreational and slot machines located in restaurants in the city of Valencia .

According to police sources, the arrested, aged 43 and Romanian nationality, accessed the box of the machines by an electronic drill they had hidden in a bandolier and a rod to collect money. Once the loot was obtained, they covered the hole with putty.

This system is known in police media as "socavón", since in mining it is the word used to identify the tunnel through which the ore vein is accessed.

The two individuals, who meticulously planned the robberies, possessed extensive knowledge about the operation and typology of the recreational machines they selected to swindle. Okay, I know what your are thinking! The machines are swindlers anyway!

Celebration?

On the early hours of New Year's Day, police on the island of Ibiza apprehended a 31-year-old man who was driving erratically. When the officers carried out all possible drug tests available to them, they found that the partygoer had ingested every single one of the substances their machinery can detect. These included cannabis, amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine and opioids, Ibiza town hall reported. Officers also searched the drugged-up merrymaker's vehicle, finding everything from pink and purple pills, more cocaine and a brown substance that they haven't been able to identify yet.

Up to 40% of drivers who cause deadly road accidents in Spain have consumed alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription medication.

New Orleans is the only city in the world you go in to buy a pair of nylon stockings and they want to know your head size.

Billie Holiday

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'Come and enjoy the authentic taste of Spain.'
Русский говорят.








Some Happy Medical News.

Hospital stays and operations are a trial for everybody, but can be particularly difficult for children.

The medical team in the surgical centre of Parc Taulí Hospital in Sabadell, Barcelona, wanted to humanize the paediatric care in the operating theatres and wards.

Children's decorations, toys, clowns, music in the operating room were all introduced to make the children and indeed their worried parents a little calmer. During the first week of the new program, a remote operated car was also introduced which carried 12 children to the operating room, see photo right. None of these children needed pre-medication. The project was inspired by a scheme which was developed in a hospital in Oklahoma, USA.

The photo below shows a new scheme introduced to an operating theatre in La Paz Hospital, Madrid.



After the hospital food, a Barium meal is a treat. It goes in like liquid clay and comes out like a 62-piece earthenware tea-set. If you've got constipation, well, then you've got an early Henry Moore on your hands.

Griff Rhys Jones



Sometimes you have to admit it's time to retire.



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CONTACT

Terrí

Shirl

34344641

659259706



Your Local Voting Rights in Spain.

Madrid and London have negotiated a bilateral treaty to maintain local voting rights for the 300,000 British nationals living in Spain and the more than 115,000 Spaniards residing in the UK. The agreement was signed on Monday, January 21st. Of the 90,000 Brit's who have already registered to vote in Spain, 63,000 are in the province of Alicante, according to the latest INE data for 2017. The timing of this is most important as both countries are holding municipal elections in May. British residents in Spain have a deadline to show their willingness to vote in municipal elections - if they have not done so in previous elections - until January 30. Chances are if you are reading this and have not voted previously in Spain or indicated your wish to do so, it may now probably be too late to register for the May elections, but you can always apply anyway.

According to diplomatic sources, Spain is the first EU country to sign an agreement of this type with the United Kingdom. The negotiation began at the end of October. This agreement is necessary regardless of whether the Brexit occurs with or without agreement, because this aspect of citizens' rights is not provided for in the exit agreement. For the municipalities of May 26, there is a transitional provision according to which the nationals of the United Kingdom who are registered on January 30, 2019 in the Electoral

Census of Resident Aliens in Spain for municipal elections will not have to fulfil other requirements and their Registration will remain valid.

Article 3 of the agreement establishes that British nationals must have a period of legal and uninterrupted residence of three years. Thus, in the municipal elections of 2023, all British nationals who are registered for the 2019 municipal elections may participate.

The text also specifies that the continuity of British local elected officials is guaranteed until the end of their term, even after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union. In Spanish municipalities there are about thirty councillors of British nationality. Unfortunately in both the Torreveija and Orihuela municipalities there are no British councillors despite the high numbers of British expats residing there.

The United Kingdom will not be the first country outside the EU whose nationals can vote in the Spanish municipal elections, given that Spain already has agreements for this with Bolivia, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, South Korea, Ecuador, Iceland, Norway, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago.





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The Truth!

When the husband finally died his wife put the usual death notice in the paper, but added that he died of gonorrhoea. No sooner were the papers delivered when a friend of the family phoned and complained bitterly, "You know very well that he died of diarrhoea, not gonorrhoea."

Replied the widow, "I nursed him night and day so of course I know he died of diarrhoea, but I thought it would be better for posterity to remember him as a great lover rather than the big shit he always was."

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Being British

Being British is about driving in a German car to an Irish pub where we imbibe copious amounts of Belgian or eastern European beer, then on the way home stopping to pick up an Indian curry or a Turkish kebab to consume as we sit on our Swedish furniture watching American shows on Japanese TVs.

Robert Readman

The Nun's Story

Two nuns have admitted stealing a "substantial" sum of money from the school they worked at to go gambling in Las Vegas.

Sisters Mary Kreuper and Lana Chang, photo, are believed to have taken up to \$500,000 from St James' Catholic School in the city of Torrance, near Los Angeles, to spend in casinos over a period of ten years. This figure is expected to rise following an audit in December 2018.

The pair, who are said to be best friends and recently retired, worked at the school. Kreuper was the school principal for 29 years and Chang worked as a teacher for about 20 years.

The nuns were allegedly able to conceal their actions by depositing cheques made out to the school for tuition and other fees into a separate bank account not used by the school. Also every autumn, the school held a Harvest Festival fundraiser, with rides and food booths. Families each had to put in \$100 and buy a ticket for the Big Red Raffle. Chang was one of the raffle winners every year!

The church does not want to press charges and wanted to resolve the situation internally, with the money repaid and the nuns disciplined by their order. In a letter to the parishioners, the two nuns "asked for forgiveness and prayers"and asked for \$50 to be put on Black!

Parents whose children attended the school in Torrance long believed that the campus was financially strapped. Textbooks were 2 decades old. There wasn't enough money for new basketball uniforms. When parents would ask, year after year, for an awning to shade their children's outdoor lunch area; the principal, Sister Mary Margaret Kreuper, would respond, "How do you expect to pay for it?"

But oddly, this was not an isolated incident. Sister Marie Thornton, 62, blew more than \$850,000 she embezzled from New York's Iona College to support a wicked gambling addiction. Sister Marie was in charge of the Catholic school's finances between 1999 and 2009, during which time she submitted false invoices and had the college pay her credit card debts. During regular weekend trips to casinos in Atlantic City over a ten year period, she would lose between \$2,000 and \$5,000 a visit.

Her defence lawyer came up with a phenomenal horseshit defence, stating that the poor girl's criminal behaviour was a result of childhood abuse: "When Sister Marie was gambling, she was able to stop the internal suffering. Gambling gave her a feeling of freedom." However, Sister Marie, photo, or Susie as she is known to her friends, still went to jail.



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Cricket.

The members seated in the Pavilion of the Test Match refused to join in the Mexican Wave. Well, when you get to a certain age, every time you just get out of your chair, it's a bit of an adventure.
Henry Blofeld

Major Changes to Spanish Rental Law - Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos - LAU

A number of significant changes to the Spanish rental system were introduced during 2018. Much of these relate to long term rentals and holiday rentals. I outline some of the changes below but it is not a comprehensive list.

Tax Reporting.

Property portals and estate agents who handle rentals for clients, now have to disclose the relevant tax related details to the Spanish tax authorities. These include name & address of owners, names of renters and details of individual stays, amounts paid and more. Details for the year 2018 must be reported now. Although the Hacienda have only asked for details for 2018, they can if they wish go back four years.

These new tax laws now force estate agents and property portals such as AirBnb and others, to report the rental income of clients or face draconian fines of up to €600,000.

Fines for non-payment of tax on rental income range from 50 to 150% of the undeclared amounts, plus delay interest. Any unpaid tax can be placed as a charge against the Spanish property.

Holiday/Tourist Lettings/Rentals & Urbanisations.

There is no doubt that in some instances holiday rentals have caused many headaches for full time residents. This has usually been, but not exclusively, in apartment blocks where a handful of noisy summer rentals ruins the peace and tranquillity of long-term residents.

Up until now, if an urbanisation wanted to ban tourist rentals, Spain's Horizontal Property Act outlined that unanimity among the owners was required to ban them. Naturally, a single owner could then vote against this and the ban could not be introduced.

However, the relevant Act has now been amended allowing the Community of Owners to vote by a simple majority of 3/5 to ban outright holiday rentals within a community.

Another new amendment to the Act advises that in the case of holiday lettings, the Community of Owners can increase the communal quota assigned to a landlord of the overall community budget. This increase is capped at 20% of the quota. Simply put, communities of owners may now vote to increase the community quota of a property owner who uses his property or properties as holiday lettings.

None of the above changes apply retroactively.

I have had to ring-fence the followin info' as the Spanish Congress kicked out the new law on Jan' 23! So for the present **only long-term tenancy agreement signed between the 19th of December 2018 and the 22nd of January 2019** will be ruled by the new decree explained below.

Changes to Long Term Rentals.

2019 will see the following changes:

Physical landlords: 5 years mandatory renewal period on long-term rentals (plus 3 years tacit renewal periods).

Previously it was three years plus one.

Legal landlords: 7 years mandatory rental period on long-term rentals (plus 3 years tacit renewal periods). Previously it was three years plus one.

Legal landlords: additional bank guarantees demanded by a landlord on long-term rentals may not exceed a two-month deposit. Landlords typically request additional guarantees besides the compulsory one-month tenant deposit, especially when a tenant is a non-resident (because of the increased financial risk). These guarantees are now capped for legal persons acting as landlords. For physical landlords there is no change and may keep requesting additional guarantees in excess of the 2-month deposit.

Legal landlords: landlords – by law – will pay the commission to estate agencies on tenancy agreements: it was the case that tenants paid half or all this commission whether directly or not.

(Most of the above has been sourced from Raymundo Larraín Nesbitt. You can read more of his excellent advice here -

<https://www.larrainnesbittabogados.com/article.php?id=337>)

Things You Don't Want to Hear during Surgery.

"Better save that. We'll need it for the autopsy."
 "Wait a minute, if this is his spleen, then what's that?"
 "Bo! Bo! Come back with that! Bad Dog!"
 "Hand me that ... uh ... that uh ... Thingie"
 "Ya know, there's big money in kidneys ... and this guy's got two of 'em."
 "Everybody stand back! I lost my contact lens!"
 "Could you stop that thing from beating; it's throwing my concentration off."
 "What's this doing here?"

I am really enjoying the new Martin Luther King Jr. Stamp - just think about all those white bigots, licking the backside of a black man. Dick Gregory



"Yeah? Well, if people look like their pets, why don't you go home and look after your gorilla?"

(I found the article below in Quartz by Annalisa Merelli interesting. Annalisa, a reporter at Quartz, hails from Bergamo (Italy) but has worked and lived in Paris and Delhi before settling in the US (for now).)

Just how much are the UK and the US ready to sacrifice in order to keep their neighbors out? Both countries are ending another tense week of trying to answer this question.

In the UK, prime minister Theresa May barely survived a no-confidence vote, and the country still has no Brexit deal—nor any clarity on whether it should continue with the process. So far, that process has contributed to the economy suffering a 2.1% contraction, and a no-deal Brexit could make the situation worse than it was in 2008.

Meanwhile, the US is enduring the longest-ever government shutdown, which has left 800,000 federal workers without pay and could cost the economy more than \$6 billion, as the president holds the budget hostage over his campaign promise of a wall on the southern border. Eventually, a prolonged shutdown could help push the US into a recession (paywall) as well.

Brexit, the shutdown, the wall: These all stem from the same political pursuit to keep immigrants out. The issue has been sold



as economic—people worried for their jobs, their savings, their welfare. But given the losses that supporters of Brexit and the wall are willing to accept, it's increasingly clear that xenophobia is at the core.

Xenophobia is a composite of two words from ancient Greek, one meaning “fear” and the other “stranger” or “enemy.” But as we watch these governments bend over backwards to keep out a relatively small number of foreigners, “fear” does not seem to be the right word.

“Hatred” does. A hatred of the foreigner portrayed as dangerous, ill-intentioned, and undeserving. And not just any foreigner: the poor, the jobless, the non-white. Also the non-Christian: Trump recently tweeted about “prayer rugs” allegedly found at the border—the ultimate sign of its dangerousness.

All that is ironic, given what these governments are hanging themselves up for: a hatred that's quietly growing so large it's destroying their stability from within, all for fear of someone coming from the outside to do the same.

Just Checking!

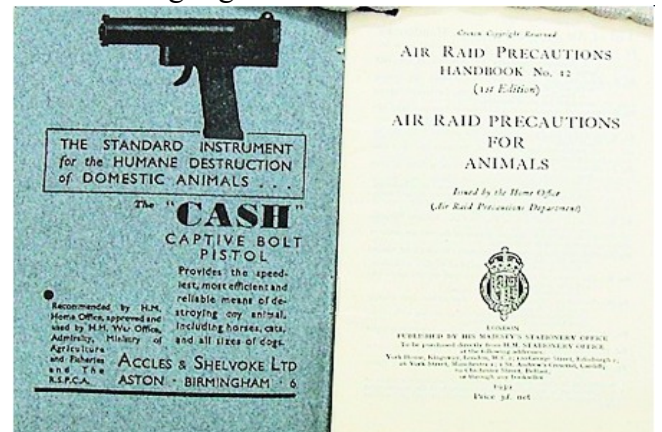
I just popped over to my Grandma's, and you've got to hand it to her. At 96, she had all the Halloween decorations up, cobwebs, insects in the windows and a skeleton on the couch.

She always makes such a big effort ... but she wouldn't answer the door. I guess I'll just pop back next year.

During the Christmas/holiday period, a couple of stories concerning dogs (and pets) caught my attention.

In the first, the Local Police have opened an investigation after 18 dogs of a potentially dangerous breed were abandoned together in a fenced children's playground in Seville. According to users of the park, the animals were left there between four and seven in the early morning of Jan' 7. The dogs are a cross between two breeds classified as potentially dangerous: the American Stafford and the Presa Canario. The 18 dogs, who are in good health, are now in the Municipal Zoosanitary and, if the owners do not appear, they will be included in an animal adoption program.

This second story I find a bit disturbing. Britain has a long-held reputation as a nation of animal lovers. Historically, Britain was the first country in the world to implement animal protection laws, with legislation put in place as far back as 1822. However, during the run-up to WWII, the British government formed the National Air Raid Precautions Animals Committee in 1939 to decide what to do with all their animals once war broke out. The committee's primary concern was food shortages made worse due to people feeding their pets, so to curtail this potential problem, they sent out a pamphlet called "Advice to Animal Owners" ... which came with an advertisement for a specific type of gun. You can see where this is going.



The pamphlet advised the population that if they could not send their pets into the countryside, "it really is kindest to have them destroyed." How did the British population take this order? With protests across the Isles, surely? Not exactly. Within the course of a week, 750,000 family pets were "destroyed." "Sorry Billy. We had to put Rover down. We don't want him barking in German." By the way, Accles & Shelvoke are still trading and manufacturing the same stuff. A tribute to great British engineering in the Midlands.

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THURSDAY

La Marina Urbanisation

SATURDAY

**c.c. Bahia del Las Dunas
La Marina (opposite Lidl)**

SUNDAY

**Lemon Tree No.44
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ALL MARKETS

9:00am - 1:00pm approx.

Man runs into the Doctor's office. "Doctor! Doctor!" he yells, "I've got five penises!" "Five penises?" the Doctor says, "How do your pants fit?"..... "Like a glove!"

They're making a film about Harold Shipman starring Robert DeNiro. It's called 'The Old Dear Hunter.'

Drummer walks into a shop and asks to see the drum kits, the assistant says, "You're a drummer aren't you", "Yes" says the drummer, "how could you tell" "This is a chemists" says the assistant.

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Looking for a Date?

With St. Valentine's Day on the 14th, I thought it might be appropriate to look at some online dating requests. Now online dating certainly has its dangers and problems of which one should be aware, but some examples are very funny.

- Needed quick! Date to family reunion. Three days, all expenses paid. Looking for man who is 30-45, tall, healthy, and smart. Must be comfortable with strangers, able to play endless hours of frisbee, and not a vegetarian. Must be either Christian or willing to pretend, have a good job, and like animals and kids. Please be well-groomed, too. Ironed clothes are a big plus. I am a 31 yo athletic brunette with brown eyes. Please don't respond if you don't think you can pretend to be my boyfriend.

- My name is Willa, I am 35, divorced, attractive, and lonely. I am looking for a LTR with someone who is honest and conversational. I will be honest too. I hate kids, so don't even bother me if you have them. I hate in-laws (bad experience so don't expect me to love them. I hate cats, so get rid of it or don't bother me. I hate sports, so if that is your thing, either bring your own television or find someone who likes them. I am curvy, 5'7", brown hair, brown eyes, and have a great job.

- SW--28 tired of dealing with love. Looking for a man who is NOT a retarded, crazy, stupid, ugly, short, fat, drunk, jobless, mean, depressed, lying loser.

- Single (again) 18, cute, 5'7", 130 pounds. Black hair, blue eyes. my heart has broken hundreds of times over the years. I need someone mature, (18-19 1/2), pref. a Leo or Aries.

Not forgetting the older generation.....



- Active, healthy, octogenarian seeking handsome older man for committed relationship. must be healthy, polite, and very good in bed.

- Janet--79, widowed twice. Not looking to marry again, just want to date nice gentleman close to my age. I hold a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and am currently training in Judo. I know how to defend myself. So no perverts.

- 76 (look 65) DW, being pushed relentlessly by granddaughter to find a new boyfriend. Looking for mentally stable, nice looking man of any age, race, style, and background that is willing to put up with me. Please like pets, gardening and nosy grandchildren.

- 81--Had enough commitment. Seeking someone for casual dating and romance. If it works you can move into my spare apartment. Both free to date others. Please be clean, kind, and have no criminal background. Be willing to be tested for drugs/STD's.

And....Dear prince on a white horse, if you won't show up soon, I will start dating with that stupid goat with the new Mercedes.



Never do anything you wouldn't want to explain to the paramedics!

Almost 250 runners in a half marathon in Shenzhen, China, were caught cheating when traffic cameras captured them taking shortcuts through bushes. Organisers of the race also discovered 18 runners wearing fake number stickers and three runners they described as "imposters". Footage captured by Shenzhen police traffic cameras showed runners cutting through bushes to an adjacent carriageway, instead of continuing along the road and making a U-turn.

Organisers said the 237 people caught cheating would have run two or three kilometres less than the full 21-kilometre (13.1-mile) distance. The annual race in China's fourth largest city typically attracts about 16,000 runners. Last year, organisers of the Beijing Half Marathon introduced a facial recognition system to stop runners using ringers to run on their behalf!

Closer to home, the 30th Annual Half-Marathon took place at Santa Pola during January. Over 4,000 athletes took part, but the first three who crossed the tape, Ethiopians, were disqualified as it seems they, probably unwittingly, did not stick to the prescribed course. Moroccan Hassam Ahouchar, who came fourth, was awarded first prize.



Drinking and online shopping, it's often said, don't go together. And an unnamed Chinese man has revealed that he woke up with a hangover after the annual Singles' Day shopping frenzy – China's answer to Black Friday – to find that he'd bought a Thai mini pig, a peacock and a giant salamander. "All along I thought I'd only bought two sets of clothes," he said. Specsavers?

A Norwegian warship worth £385m has sunk after smashing into an oil tanker in Hjeltefjord, off the coast near Bergen. KNM Helge Ingstad – a 5,290-ton, 134-metre frigate, which was under Nato command at the time of the collision and is armed with missiles, torpedoes and depth charges – was on an exercise when it hit a (much-bigger) Maltese-flagged oil tanker early on 8 November. A large hole was torn in the warship's side, and the Norwegian navy beached the vessel in an attempt to save it. It finally sank five days later after the cables holding it in place snapped, bringing the rescue attempt to a dramatic end. It was one of only five ships in Norway's navy.

I have to admit that I was surprised at the small size of the Norwegian Navy. I can remember when the Irish Navy had only three ships and the first verse of a Dubliner's song went as follows:

"The Cliona, the Maeve and the Macha,
The pride of the Irish Navy,
When the Captain he blows on his whistle
All the sailors go home for their tea."

The Irish Navy now has eight ships and 1,049 personnel.

When a resident of Barking and Dagenham in east London recognised a woman caught on CCTV illegally dumping a mattress on the council's "wall of shame" website, he reported her – even though she was his wife! The man called Barking and Dagenham's "grime crime" hotline and

his wife – from whom he is not estranged – was issued with a £150 fixed penalty, which she paid. Council leader Darren Rodwell thanked him for "letting us know who has done this, despite their circumstances." I do believe this guy should get a permanent food taster now, just in case.

A 31-year-old jail inmate who was being transported to answer charged in another county escaped from authorities in Kentucky. After he ran to a highway he tried hitchhiking and was soon picked up by a motorist. The motorist he flagged down was a law enforcement officer, who noticed that the absconder was still wearing handcuffs on one wrist. So, straight back to the hoosegow!



The United Nations came into existence to vanquish Germany, as 26 nations jointly pledged in 1942 not to surrender to "savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate



the world." Three-quarters of a century later, the woman who would soon become President Trump's pick to represent the United States at the United Nations cited the D-Day landings — a cornerstone of this unwavering Allied pledge and the basis of the Nazi defeat on the Western Front — to showcase the strength of German-American relations. Heather Nauert (photo) cited D-Day as the height of U.S.-German relations! Now she's headed to the U.N. as the next United States Ambassador to the United Nations. And yes, she is blond.....incoming!

National Police have arrested a 43-year-old man in a commercial establishment in València, as the alleged perpetrator of robbery with violence and intimidation, after stealing a cheese and an Iberian shoulder of ham that cost 28 euros, according to the police who were called to a supermarket in the district of Trànsits de València. When the police arrived they found that moments before the thief had tried to leave the place without paying, at which point he was intercepted by the security guard but managed to escape after a struggle. As the police were taking a statement from the security guard, the thief returned to the shop as he wanted to retrieve his wallet, which he dropped during the struggle. Naturally, he was immediately collared by the police.

A stone circle estimated to be 4,500-years-old caused huge excitement when it was found in Aberdeenshire in December. The county council called it an "amazing" discovery; Historic Environment Scotland said its "rich lichen cover" was proof "of the ring's antiquity". But research into it has now come to an abrupt halt: the former owner of the land has called to explain that it was he who built the circle 20 years ago. "It's disappointing to learn of this development," said the council, "but it adds an interesting element to its story."

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Medical Negligence in Spain

According to National Public Radio in the States, as many as 440,000 patients die each year as a result of medical errors or negligence. No doubt the subsequent compensation claims account for the incredibly high settlements and high insurance rate for the medical profession in the US.

Looking at the situation in Spain, during 2018 there were 14,335 denuncias registered in the country in relation to medical negligence. Of these, 352 complaints were lodged on behalf of patients who died. (Unfortunately the same source then said that complaints regarding medical fatalities last year came to 810!)

The Valencian Community registered a total of 70 deaths due to alleged bad errors in the health field. In the province of Alicante these came to 24 deaths relating to malpractice from a total of 501 complaints.

In the Valencian Community, the top five hospitals for complaints, in order of ranking, were Hospital Universitari i Politècnic La Fe, Hospital General Universitario de Alicante, Hospital General Universitario de València, Hospital de Manises and Hospital General Universitario de Elche. You will note none of our local hospitals are on this list.

Among the most reported were medical errors were in General Surgery, Traumatology, Waiting Lists, Gynaecology and Emergency.

There is no doubt that rapid and effective care and treatment can vary enormously from area to area. In some areas, people have to wait two weeks to see their GP. A medical malpractice association, *Defensor del Paciente*, collated the data above and also reported that "What hit us the most in 2018 was the large number of patients with carcinogenic diseases that were kept months and months waiting for treatment or intervention."

Fortunately, in our local area, waiting lists are relatively short and medical standards appear quite high, but mistakes can and do occur - fortunately not too often.



"The small neat scar was from the surgery.
The long jagged scar is where I sneezed."



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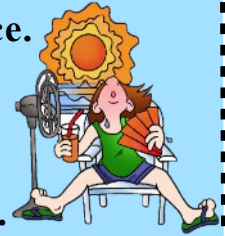


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Is a Computer Male or Female?

A professor at the end of his last class to a group of post-graduates told the students that he wants to have one last group activity with them before he leaves the college. He asked men to move to one side of the class and women to move to the other side. He then wrote the following question on the board and asked both the groups to think about the answer with justifications: "Is the computer a male or female?"

Men's response: The computer is female because

1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic
2. When computers communicate with each other, they communicate in code language only they can understand
3. Every mistake we make is stored in their hard-drive which can be retrieved later
4. As soon as you commit to one, you find yourself spending half your pay check accessorizing it.

Women's response: The computer is male because

1. To get their attention, you need to turn them ON
2. They have a lot of data but still can't think by themselves
3. They are supposed to solve our problems, but half the time they ARE the problem
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you had awaited a little longer you could have got a better model!

(Mel B)

Coming Soon!

CURLY'S HOG ROAST

With Attitude!



Aliens!

Out in space two aliens are monitoring planet Earth. The first one says, "The dominant life-forms on the planet have developed satellite-based weapons and land-based nuclear weapons."

The second alien says, "Do you think they may be an emerging intelligence?"

The first replies, "I don't think so.....they have them aimed at themselves!"

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Two patients limp into two different British medical clinics with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement. The first patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week. The second sees the family doctor after waiting more than a week for an appointment, then waits eighteen weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray, which isn't reviewed for another month and finally has his surgery scheduled for 6 months from then. Why the different treatment for the two patients? The first is a Golden RetrieverThe second is a Senior Citizen.

Lime Bar Fishing SUNBATHING Club

Well, thank God that year has gone. Hopefully we will have a healthier one this year.

We have had 2 matches since the last report. To say the least we didn't do very well in either.

The December match was fished at El Bosquet again and the carp did not start feeding until lunch time. We fished pegs 11 to 24 and there was very little to indicate where the fish were let alone get a bite. Very few carp were caught but I was lucky to win with half a dozen mullet for 4 kilos. 2nd was new boy Brian with 3.4 kilos followed by 3 rods with 2.6.

The January match was a catastrophe. It was fished at Bigastro and when we arrived, there was a hard frost on the ground with the car thermometer flashing on 2° C. Most anglers were wrapped up in multiple layers looking like Michelin men. See photo. Earlier in December the river authorities had cleared most of the reeds on both banks but had left a few clumps along the match stretch. It was just our luck that they decided to do the last bit of trimming on match day. The tractor driver trundled onto the scene just before the match started. He was quite good though and very accurate at manipulating the blade. He let some anglers stay in their pegs while he worked around them but sometimes, he was a bit too close for comfort, so several of us moved our tackle up the bank (just in case). The more trusting anglers left their tackle set up while he smashed the reeds within a foot of their gear. See photo. Just John later complained that the cutter had knocked reeds onto his keepnet! Needless to say, what with the freezing temperatures and the reed cutter, catches were very poor (even for one of "our" match days). It was a good day to carry a flask and lots of snacks to keep us warm and pass the time, at least with a "naked" bank we could see that everyone else was struggling, and had time to feed the robins that were coming down for a snack. Fagin had obviously predicted this situation as he was sat in his comfy chair doing a crossword puzzle (he said he was auditing the club accounts).



We waited and waited for that elusive bite from the big one that would win the match. It never happened for most of us. There were 13 anglers on the bank and several did not have a bite all day. Only 3 anglers caught and they only had 7 fish between them. Well done 3 rods who landed 3 fish for 5 kilos (including one of 2.34) to win, followed by new boy Brian who came 2nd again. Beat me Phil took 3rd spot again with 2 fish.



During December and the 1st couple of days of January (yes, some hardy members were fishing on New Years Day) several big fish have been landed at Bigastro. Sweeney and Fagash both caught on the same day with fish of 6.4 and 7 pounds respectively, but just before Christmas, Ball Boy went to the top of the leader board with a 10.4 pounder from the match stretch. Unfortunately, his fishing buddy Chris needs some tuition on how to use a camera. One photo shows the fish with Ball Boy's

head missing, the 2nd had the fish in dark shade so you couldn't see it. Never mind Ball Boy, we will get your photo in here one day!

Next ~~meeting~~ bun fight is at The Lime Bar @ 17.00 Mon 4th February.

Fishy Fingers!

The Ghost

(Some wonderful photos there Ghost, which really deserve a wider screen. But why is there a shadow of an erect penis at the bottom of the second photo? What do you blokes get up to? Mick, Editor)

Last Wish.

A Northern wife on her deathbed says to her husband: 'I want you, as my dying wish, to travel in the first car with my mother.' Her husband replies: 'Just to please you, pet, I will, but I'm telling you now, it'll spoil my day.'

Geordie joke.



HELP Vega Baja was established 36 years ago and covers from Pilar del Horadada to La Marina and inland. The charity supports people at times of need and in 2018 donated €42,000 euros to good causes. The main office of the charity is in San Miguel where they also have a charity shop and mobility equipment hire. An office in La Marina at the Hope Christian Fellowship Centre and a host of support groups, welfare service support, a new befriending service, a hospital visiting group (upon request) and the increasingly popular Connections Team which offers 24 hours confidential emotional support on 965 021 552 are just some of the ways in which this charity supports people. Working alongside social workers, the British Consulate and other charities, HELP Vega Baja prides itself on the quality of the service it offers which president, Michele Masson, puts down to “the tremendous support” provided by their team of volunteers. Michele said “we believe that it is important our volunteers are happy and are benefiting from their role with the charity in the same way that the charity and those that we support benefit from their generosity of time offered. Ongoing support and training is offered and appreciating that volunteers may also have other commitments, we are very happy to work around the times that volunteers are able to offer”

HELP Vega Baja also has a membership of some 1700 members – all entitled to various benefits for their 10 euros a year membership fee, including free translation, help when coming out of hospital and much more (limits and qualifying periods apply – see www.helpvegabaja.com for a full list of current benefits).

For more information about any of the services provided by HELP Vega Baja or if you are interested in finding out about volunteering with the charity call 966 723 733 or email office@helpvegabaja.com

If something is troubling you (no matter what it is), you can call the Connection Team any time of the day or night on 965 021 552 – don’t struggle alone, call the team.

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A peasant between two lawyers is like a fish between two cats.
Spanish proverb.

Assurances from PM Sanchez.

With an estimated 750,000 UK nationals living in Spain, the socialist government of PM Sanchez has announced that in the event of a no-deal Brexit, the president is ready to pass a law immediately to prevent them becoming 'illegal immigrants' and to continue to be able to access the national health service, pensions, State benefits such as dole money, and to live and work.

Parliamentary spokeswoman Isabel Celáa says the law will come into force in February if the UK continues without a concrete deal with the required backing.

Where this leaves holiday home owners, present and future, who are not full-time residents in Spain, is not clear, but Sánchez intends to allow Brits to travel freely between the UK and Spain without a visa, and will authorise flights between the two countries straight away, meaning expats will still be able to return for trips to see their families and UK residents will not be cut off from their homes in the sun.

Given that foreign buyers, of whom Brits make up a significant number, are helping the housing market to recover – and boost the economy by spending in Spain on their holidays – it seems likely Sánchez will ensure no extra hurdles apply to purchasing homes on Spanish territory, or for those who already own second properties to live in them permanently in the future when they retire. (Inheritance tax for 'non EU' citizens will however be more penal.)

British residents in Spain remain sceptical and say they will not believe anything until they see it in black and white, but many are confident Sánchez's government will support them as promised. It is very noticeable that whereas they are receiving reassurances from Spain, none are forthcoming from the UK.

The French have said that for Brit's in France, they will mirror the same rights facilitated for the French in the UK. After viewing the ineptitude and indeed cruel omissions of the British Home Office during recent years, one cannot have great confidence in a satisfactory outcome there.



Airport Bus Timetable.

This service will provide eight return trips between Alicante-Elche Airport and Torreveja central bus depot. It will operate every day of the year and without any stops.

Torreveja to Airport: 7:00 - 9:00 - 10:00* - 11:00 - 12:00* - 13:00 - 15:00 - 16:00* - 17:00 - 18:00* - 19:00 - 21:00

Airport to Torreveja: 8:00 - 10:00 - 11:00* - 12:00 - 13:00* - 14:00 - 16:00 - 17:00* - 18:00 - 19:00* - 20:00 - 22:00

(* - From 1st April to 31st October

Price: €6.92. Children under 4 years travel for free but ID may be requested.

Pensioners can get a 30% discount but only if they are registered as permanent residents in the Valencian Community.

You may need to show proof of age ID plus Residencia, NIE or DNI. A bit of a palaver really.

Prior booking is not required. Sometimes the bus fills up quickly with people and you have to wait more than 2 hours for the next bus.

Applying Online for A Padron Appointment In Orihuela.

Many of us who have been over here for some years will only be too aware of the many, many hours of seemingly endless queues while waiting to register for Padron, Residencia, SUMA - in fact most things. The bureaucracy in Spain teaches us all patience.

Fortunately the local council have come up with a very welcome efficiency, where one can now register online for an appointment.

On this website you can choose day, date and time for your appointment, subject of course to availability.

The web address is located below and is, helpfully, also available in the English language.

When you first try to access the site, you may get a warning saying that this particular website does not have a security certificate. I just ignored it.

Aside from the appointments facility, the website also contains information relating to participation, transparency etc. <https://orihuela.governalia.es/en/>

Lee's Event's List

This helpful and informative internet link was submitted by the late Lee Bell.

<https://www.eurotourguide.com/en/events-calendar/2245/>

Red Days Valencian Community - 2019

These are the holidays: January 1 (New Year); March 19 (San José); April 19 (Good Friday); April 22 (Easter Monday); May 1 (Labour Fiesta) June 24 (San Juan); August 15 (Assumption of the Virgin); October 9 (Day of the Valencian Community); October 12 (National Holiday); November 1 (All Saints' Day); December 6 (Constitution Day); December 25 (Christmas).

And don't forget your local municipality will also have at least an extra two days of holidays, dependent on the local patron saint days, although most stores will ignore these.

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(016 is the phone line to report domestic violence. It is free and leaves no trace on your phone bill.)

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The editor, Mick, can be contacted at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com or at 586 Dream Hills. (Or in some Bar!)



Woody.