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Taken to the cleaners

An investigation into burglaries of shops, homes and warehouses in Alicante has found that a cleaner was supplying the thieves with information about the places she worked, according to the National Police.

The investigation was launched after a car dealership in the city reported a break-in in which €6,000 was stolen and damage estimated at about €13,000 was caused.



Photo: National Police

The business's representative said it was very strange that the alarm had not gone off, and did not seem to have

been damaged or deactivated by force. The concessionary's security cameras showed the

assailants break the front door lock and a window in the façade, then go straight to the alarm and deactivate

it, proving they must have known the code, the police spokesman claimed.

Focusing on people who knew this code, officers suspected a woman from the company's cleaning agency, who happened to have numerous previous records for thefts and burglaries from businesses, hospitality establishments and homes where she had worked as a cleaner.

They also attributed a burglary of another city centre business to the same culprits.

Continued on page 2

Unusual herbs to grow

Forget parsley and mint, try growing bergamot, lemon grass and sweet cicely to perk up your dishes.



Page 15

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Taken to the cleaners

Continued from front page

The cleaner provided a great deal of information to help the other gang members carry out the burglaries more effectively and steal as much as possible, including about houses she cleaned and the people who lived in them, the spokesman alleged.

The two men who carried out the burglaries staked out the homeowners they were targeting and even followed their social network profiles to check if they were going away.

The three suspects were arrested when officers raided each of their homes, where there were various stolen goods from burglaries, including a bakery in Alicante

city, a gold-plated silver chalice from a church in Murcia region, and several keys and remote controls for garages and houses, and for a tobaccoist they were allegedly planning to burgle.

There were also tools for tampering with and breaking locks.

The chalice had been stolen from a church in Cobatillas in December 2022 and was returned to the very grateful parish priest.

The suspects, who are aged between 30 and 37 and all Spanish, were put before a court in Alicante, while the investigation continues in order to determine whether any of the stolen goods will lead to more charges or arrests.

Hospital extension plans revised

Plans to extend Marina Baixa hospital in Villajoyosa have been redesigned to provide 113 additional beds, announced regional health councillor Marciano Gómez.

This will increase its

capacity from 285 beds to 398, and the budget for the project from €57 million to €102.6M.

Full report in Friday's

Costa Blanca News

Keeping it in the family

Orihuela town hall has set up an observatory of the family, to advise inform and carry out studies that will help the council to implement policies which will promote the wellbeing of local families.

The councillor for the family, María del Carmen Portugal of the Vox party, said her department has been working on this for the last five months, following recent criticism from opposition parties that it appeared to have been doing nothing and her request to combine her €50,00 per annum full-time position as councillor with other, private employment.

The objectives are to provide society with a comprehensive and up to date vision of the state of families in Orihuela, provide the council with information to facilitate decision making relating to support for families and motherhood, instigate research about families, and promote strategies to prevent



family difficulties.

In September 2023, the family department met with associations related to different aspects of families: fueron AADEM Vega Baja, ASAFAN, Caritas, FAMOCOVA, Fundacion Familia y Educacion, Movimiento Familiar Cristiano, Mujeres para el Tercer Milenio, RedMadre and Toda Vida Importa.

Only 22% of these associations had previously collaborated with the town hall, Sr

Portugal noted.

Several are linked to the Catholic Church and are against abortion.

The observatory will meet every four months, in January, May and September, and its conclusions will be distributed to various media, such as publications, events, conferences and websites, in order to inform the community and actors involved in promoting the wellbeing of families, the councillor added.

Pet sterilisation campaign underway

By Irena Bodnarec

The town of La Nucía has launched a pet sterilisation campaign in conjunction with five veterinary practices, offering a 20% discount on the normal rate until the end of

the month (March 31).

Residents who are listed on the municipal register (padrón) can make an appointment at any of the following clinics: Clínica Veterinaria La Nucía (96 689 57

91), Clínica Veterinaria QaliVet (96 687 36 58), Clínica Veterinaria Mediterráneo (96 587 35 11), Clínica Veterinaria La Creu II (96 689 63 74) or Clínica Veterinaria 7 Vidas (673 923 804).

The department of animal protection recommends sterilising pets to control the animal population and reduce aggressive behaviour, amongst other reasons.

Police academy preparing new cops

A total of 231 people started the course to qualify as local police officers in Alicante province last week.

The training, held at the Valencian public security and emergencies institute (IV-ASPE) in Elche, will enable vacant places to be filled in 48 different municipalities, the regional secretary for security and emergencies, Javier Montero explained.

He emphasised that the training will prepare them to be officers who are the first point of contact with the population.

The course consists of 700 hours, plus eight weeks of practical exercises, including topics such as police tac-



tics, law, criminology, self-defence and detecting drugs.

These are designed to meet new challenges facing society, for example offences related to new technologies or illegal immigration, he said.

Under the new regional government, the IVASPE has put on 17 courses for police, fire fighters and Protección Civil volunteers in the last eight months, training a total of about 1,500 people, noted Sr Montero.

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HEAD OFFICE: Calle Alicante 39, Pol. Ind. La Cala, 03509 Finestrat
info@weeklypost.es - Tel: 617 369 005

BENIJÓFAR OFFICE: C/ Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, 36,
Tel: 617 369 433

Photos: Editorial, dpa

Editorial team: Dave Jones, Jasmine Rokadia,
Alex Watkins, Irena Bodnarec, Joyce French

Contact: editor@weeklypost.es

Advertising: advertising@weeklypost.es, Tel: 617 369 005

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Crime rate dropping

The level of crime in Almoradí is 4% below the provincial average, according to statistics for the year so far from the representative of the national government in Alicante, Juan Antonio Nieves.

The sorts of offences are the same as in other municipalities with a similar sized population, and there are no especially concerning factors, he revealed at the meeting of the local security committee last week.

The most common of-

fences are thefts, principally on days when the streets are crowded or from people when they are not paying attention, and especially from vehicles.

Sr Nieves said his office will make an effort to reinforce security in situations like these and at busy events, such as the weekly market at which in recent weeks the Guardia Civil have carried out various interventions in coordination with the local police.

There was also emphasis

on an increase in internet frauds, in relation to which the Guardia Civil have held talks in local secondary schools and coordinated with these schools' directors.

Regarding gender violence, the Viogen units praised the work of the Guardia Civil and local police in the municipality.

Based on the official statistics, which indicate an 11% drop in crime from 2022 to 2023, the Guardia Civil, regional police, National Police



Photo: Town hall

and local police were very positive about the situation.

Mayoress María Gómez said they want to keep working on good coordination be-

tween the Guardia Civil and local police, and to evaluate the means available to them, 'in order to achieve good quality security'.

Second runway for Alicante airport 'on hold'

A second runway at Alicante-Elche airport is 'not necessary in the short or medium term', according to the national government.



Photo: D Jones

The statement came in reply to a parliamentary question posed by Partido Popular (PP) deputy, Agustín Almodóbar.

It notes that the airport 'currently has infrastructure with sufficient capacity -

and competitive prices - which allow for the efficient operation of airlines'.

Full report in Friday's

Costa Blanca News

Dog camp on TV

By Irena Bodnarec

The rescue dog training camp in La Nucía was featured on the regional Spanish television network À Punt on their weekly programme called 'Animalades'.

In the piece, volunteers from the NGO USAR 13 appeared, explaining their experiences following earthquakes in Turkey and floods in Libya.

Featured was Sergio Pérez with his dog Titán, Fernando



Les disciplines de recerca i rescat impliquen molta concentració per als gossos.

Garcia with his dogs Zara and Kora plus Rita Orozco with Tata.

Elena Garcia and her dog Thor performed a drill to track down a missing person

in the feature, showcasing the facilities which are used by fire departments, the army and police forces from all over Spain to train.

Photo: Town hall

Warning over feeding street cats

Elche local police have reminded residents are not allowed to feed street cats.

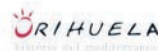
A force spokesperson reminded that the CES Gatos Elche association is the only one permitted to organise the feeding of these animals.

"If people do feed these cats without permission then it can lead to a fine," noted the spokesperson.

City hall stated that this kind of action can have a detrimental effect on the cat colonies and on residents' quality of life.



Photo: Local police



One million caps

By Irena Bodnarec

Last year Benidorm collected 1,020,000 plastic caps from six heart-shaped collection containers spread across the town.

The Caps for a New Life campaign, organised by the SEUR Foundation uses the money collected from recycling the caps to help minors with medical needs not covered by the health system to help improve their quality of their life.

The foundation collected the caps which were converted to just over €400 which is going towards help-

ing a seven-year-old girl called Julia from Valladolid suffering from spinal muscular atrophy who needs a motorised wheelchair.

Previously, the campaign helped a Benidorm resident, Leo, who received €3,200 to continue his aquatic therapy sessions as treatment for Hirschsprung's disease, linked to Down syndrome.

Since 2011, when the campaign began, almost 200 minors from across Spain have benefitted from help to finance medical or orthopaedic treatments which has exceeded €1.3 million.



Photo: Town hall



Community hubs

By Irena Bodnarec

The nine social centres across the town of La Nucía recorded 607 events throughout 2023 with a total of 22,455 people passing, of which the elections in May saw the highest concentration with a total of 7,332 residents.

The centres are located on urbanisations at Centro Social Nou Convent de les Monges, Centro Social Nucía Park, Centro Social Nou

Espai, Centro Social Copet, Centro Social Montecasio, Centro Social Pinar de Gairaita, Centro Social Kristal, Centro Social Bello Horizonte and Centro Social El Tossal. The centre at Pinar de Gairaita was most used, with 100 events registered.

The centres have also been used for annual community meetings, blood donation bank, theatre and cultural events put on by the town hall as well as private

parties and training workshops.

Residents can hire the centres, at a rate of €10 per hour on weekdays between 09.00 and 21.00, Saturdays 09.00 till 20.30 and Sundays 09.00 till 13.30. Requests must be put in at least 15 days before required and can be done in person at the town hall, by email csocial@lanucia.es or by calling 966 896 564.

Photo: Town hall

Sport all year round on the strip

The keys to a new sports park in La Manga del Mar Menor were handed over to the mayor of San Javier, José Miguel Luengo, by the regional government last week.

The site, next to the Canal del Estacio, was ceded to the regional public works department four months ago for the construction work to be carried out, and now ownership has been passed back to the town hall, which will be responsible for its

maintenance and management.

"This sports park includes new equipment and spaces for playing sport in the open air, such as basketball courts, a rock-climbing wall, a seven-side football pitch, an athletics track and a calisthenics park," explained regional councillor for public works, José Manuel Pancorbo.

"It has been turned into a natural sporting enclave to be enjoyed 365 days a year."

All the deadlines for the work were met on time, and the regional government's objective is to 'improve the lives and surroundings of residents, who can enjoy these new infrastructures from today'.

The facility represents a natural space in an idyllic setting that is not only a complementary attraction for visitors to the area, but also a recreational space for residents to play sport and admire the unique landscape.



Photo: Town hall

At the inauguration on Sunday, there were tournaments, activities, free snacks and prizes to be won.

Alcoholics Anonymous

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Sprucing up street lights

Maintenance work is taking place on the 45 streetlights in Calpe's Avenida Gabriel Miró, which requires the concrete bases, poles and supports to be repainted.

These lampposts, located on the most commercial street in the municipality, are the defining feature of the avenue, according to

the town hall.

In addition, the 19 streetlights in Paseo de las Quintas and the six benches in the area are also being painted, as was the streetlight in Calle Málaga with Puerto de Santa María.

All the lampposts are being cleaned with an electric brush and given an

anti-corrosive primer with layers of anti-graffiti protection.

Due to the specific nature of the work, the town hall put the job out to tender a few months ago and the contract was awarded to Sociedad Ibérica de Construcciones Eléctricas for €26,162.



Marisa Velázquez García (c)



Pepa Zaragoza Noguera (c)



Vicenta María Devesa Pérez (c)



Alfaz's outstanding women recognised

To mark International Women's Day (March 8), Alfaz del Pi gave recognition to five of the town's women who have stood out for their work, effort, dedication and personal or professional trajectories - People who, through their values and strengths, have left a positive mark on society - by presenting them with the 'Mujer Relevante 2024' award.

The award ceremony took

place on Saturday in the Espai Cultural Escolles Velles. Councillor for equality, Laura Sevilla commented: "With these awards we want to recognise women who inspire, who are a reference and model for all generations of Alfaz society."

The award was created in 2020 by the town hall to recognise women in the municipality who inspire and set bench-

marks. The award is a bronze sculpture made by the artist Raquel Puerta Varó.

This project also includes an open-air exhibition, Balconades Mujeres Relevantes, which can be visited in Calle Federico García Lorca. This exhibition pays tribute to women who have never received public recognition. It is a living exhibition, which grows year after year with

the photographs and biographies of the women awarded in each edition.

Pepa Zaragoza Noguera was presented with the outstanding woman in a professional field award; Marisa Velázquez García, the outstanding woman in science award; Vicenta María Devesa Pérez, the outstanding woman in a cultural field award; Sheila Martínez

The special award

Pérez, the outstanding woman Award in sport award; and, posthumously, Lina Mengual Such, the outstanding woman in a historical and social field award.

Lina Mengual Such's award was collected by her children Ángela, Venus and Daniel Méndez Mengual, and the award to boxer Sheila Martínez Pérez, was collected by her coach, Jesús Labrador, on her behalf.

Photos: Alfaz town hall

Meet your local Legion

Meet your local Royal British Legion at the Jávea golf club on Thursday, March 14 from 10.00

to 12.00. Find out who we are, what we do and what support we can offer.



Club de Golf Jávea

Photos: RBL Jávea



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Full house for Costa Blanca Concert Band

By Graham Robinson

The Costa Blanca International Concert Band gave its first concert of the year to a packed audience at the Norwegian church in El Chaparral urbanisation, Torrevieja, on Tuesday, March 5.

The band played a very varied selection, including music from Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables, Jurassic Park and Colours of the Wind.

There were solos from Alan Brookes on euphonium, who played Under the Boardwalk, and Patricia Shepley on clarinet, playing Gabriel's Oboe.

The concert finished with Songs of the Sea and a long standing ovation.

The Norwegian church is an excellent venue for concerts and we hope to be able to do more here in the future.

The band is totally inter-

national with musicians from the UK, Spain, Norway, Switzerland and Germany. We are always looking for more players to join us, contact Graham on 711 056 343 or email robinsongraham256@googlemail.com, or just come along to one of our rehearsals every Friday, downstairs at the library in San Miguel from 16.30-19.00, you will be made very welcome.

Photo: CBICB

In memory of Sandra Welham

By Paula Heffron

It was a very sad week for U3A Vall del Pop and the local community, as we said goodbye to our long-term secretary and dear friend, Sandra, who sadly lost her battle to cancer after a brave fight.

It had been Sandra and her husband Bob's intention to step down as secretary and president of the U3A Vall del Pop at the AGM at the beginning of March this year, after many years of dedicated service, to enable them to enjoy more free time together and to travel more. Sadly this was not to be.

My husband, Chris Barrett, and I had agreed to apply for the positions as president and secretary to allow them to step down, knowing there were successors who would continue their hard work and commitment with the support of the committee, associates and members.

Sadly, Sandra became unwell in December and she and Bob continued to lead remotely, still very interested and involved and supportive.

They will both be a very hard act to follow and we are grateful to the committee and associates who remain in place to support us as we find our feet.

Sandra's funeral took place at Denia crematorium on Tuesday, March 5 on a beautiful, sunny day. Unsurprisingly some 170 came to pay their respects, a testament to Sandra's popularity and the love and affection we all felt for her.

A celebration of her life followed at Casa Claudia, Jalón for close friends, and generous donations were made by many on behalf of Cancer Care (Jávea) who provided invaluable help, support and care in her final weeks at home.



If anyone wishes to make a donation you can do so via: PayPal at: cancercarejavea@outlook.com

Or via bank transfer: Banco Sabadell IBAN ES 82 0081 0660 03 0002454149 - Please mention in the 'concept' - Sandra Welham.

We hope to plan a charity musical celebration of Sandra's life in the coming months, as music was a huge part of her life.

Husband Bob wishes to thank everyone who has sent messages of condolence, affection and support and donated in her memory. Please accept this as his personal thanks.

Photos: U3AVdP



For full reports on social and cultural events see Friday's **Costa Blanca News**

Calp's dog boarding facilities

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- If it is a potentially dangerous dog, it must have all the documentation in order.

Movers and Shakers seek volunteer

Movers and Shakers is an association supporting people affected by Huntington's disease, ataxia, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

The organisation is seeking a volunteer with a caring disposition to work with its liaison officer. The role (predominantly for the Vega Baja area) involves accompanying the liaison of-

ficer on all home visits to new families and registered members of the association. This is a new volunteer role which will develop over time in consultation with the liaison officer and the president.

For further information about the association and the volunteer role, please contact Movers and Shakers president, Marion Smith, on 711 008 250.



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World Day of Prayer

By Elaine Mitchell

This special annual service was held last Friday afternoon in Albir social centre. There was a congregation of 32 which was really lovely. The service, written by the Christian women of Palestine was beautifully written and emotional due to the current situation. It was hosted by the Church of England, the Anglican Chaplaincy on the Costa Blanca.

A service of Holy Communion is held in Albir every Sunday at 09.30. Until and including Easter Sunday you can find us in the centre of Albir, turn up the hill off the main road, Camino de la Cantera, (quite near the Consum supermarket), signposted Rober Palas Hotel, turn right in front of the hotel and the church (Norwegian fishermen's church) is just inside the next road on the left, Carrer Mart. However,

after Easter we will be moving to a new location so watch this space. We have a regular weekday service every Thursday at 11.00 at the Forum Mare Nostrum, Alfaz del Pi with a healing service every month on the second Thursday.

If you need any further information please telephone the secretary, Elaine Mitchell on 636 164 467 or local representative Peter Johnson on 676 846 599.

Albir is one of seven worship centres in the chaplaincy, from Gandía to El Campello.

You can find Costa Blanca Anglican Chaplaincy (the Church of England in Spain) service times, locations and contacts and much more on the website www.costablanca-anglicanchaplaincy.org click 'About Us' - Churches and Services. Always a warm welcome for all.

Photo: Albir church

ACTS Play On for charity

Only a few weeks to go before ACTS performs 'Play On' . An amusing farce by Rick Abbot.

The group will be performing at Benijófar Cultural Centre. We hope you will come along and support the show. Proceeds are donated to local and other worthy charities .

As a taster to the plot. A keen amateur drama group are rehearsing a melodrama called Murder Most Foul. You the audience get to follow the journey from rehearsal, dress rehearsal through to show night. You can only imagine the drama caused by an interfering and eccentric playwright. A harassed director coping with temperamental actors, difficult backstage crew dealing with unexpected disasters not to mention their own shortcomings.

This is well worth watching a good evenings entertainment guaranteed for a laugh and leaving you with the feel good factor . Come along and bring your friends.

There will be a raffle each evening and drinks will be available by donation.

The performance will be at the Benijófar cultural centre from March 21- 23 at 19.30. Tickets cost €10 which can be

purchased at the following outlets:

- The Post Room, Benijófar
- MaJiK Mobiles, Benijófar
- The Card Place, Benimar
- The Post Box, Doña Pepa
- Quentin's, Algofra
- The Post Shop, Villamartin
- Cards & More, La Marina

You can also reserve tickets via WhatsApp on 672 544 026. See you there!



Photo: ACTS

For full reports on social and cultural events see Friday's **Costa Blanca News**

You don't believe in ghosts?

By Gillian Ashworth

Noël Coward would have you believe differently. In his cleverly constructed play, Blithe Spirit, he conjures up a lot of fun, by having said spirit appear at the most inconvenient moments.

Charles Condomine, a novelist and man about town, wants some background information for his latest story about the occult, so invites the local clairvoyant to come and perform a séance. He's not really too convinced, but it gives him some material for his writing. Unfortunately, Madame Arcati, did manage to contact Charles' deceased wife, who was a bit of a bitch, if truth be told, and now, from the other side, she tries to disrupt his marriage to his second wife, causing no end of havoc.

Imagine the scenario: Charles is talking to his wife Ruth, with deceased Elvira making snide comments which only he can hear, to which he responds, leaving his wife thoroughly perplexed and often annoyed.



James Grigor

Under Claire Schoonover's direction, the strong Jávea Players cast will provide an evening of mirth. James Grigor plays Charles – a complete change from being the policeman in The Mousetrap, or the disgruntled scriptwriter in Wife After Death.

Performances are April 22-27 in the Unión Musical de Gata with a matinée on the Saturday.

If sufficient interest, coaches will be organised from Jávea port interiors to Gata on 22nd, 23rd April (€10) and on 24th April from Moraira la Senieta (€12). Please complete this form asap if interested: <https://forms.gle/9BNsBeBWDmggqTjs8> or book via the website where you can also find more information - www.javeaplayers.com

Photo: Jávea Players



U3A Marina Baixa Strollers

By Joan Flint, press officer

On February 29, as a celebration of the extra day this year, the intrepid strollers went for a 'strollie-plus walk' (more than just a stroll) on the lower slopes of the Sierra Cortina near Finestrat. A total of 12 members walked approximately 5.5 kilometres uphill, through woodland to the ridge where they were surprised by the sudden sight of Benidorm from above. It looked just like a grand city scene made from LEGO and turning round they saw fantastic views of Puig Campaña, Bernia, the Ifach and plenty more. All in all they agreed it had been worth the extra effort to get up to the ridge and enjoy the views. A great

achievement which was followed up with coffee, beer and some excellent cakes at Valentina's on the way home.

Thanks to Kaithe Green who organised the walk and sent in the report and photographs.

If you would like to become a member of U3A Marina Baixa the Strollers group is just one of the many groups available to you and membership is just €10 for the year.

The next general meeting will be on Monday, March 25 at the Casa de Cultura, Alfaz del Pi beginning at 11.00. Why not go along and find out more about what is on offer.

Photo: U3A MB

What is it?

By Tony Myles

Players at the Jávea Bridge Club will have noticed a new wall hanging has appeared and will have arrived at the universally popular opinion that it is an attractive and appropriate print. They would be wrong.

Close inspection reveals the true nature of this creation. It is the work of local artist Peter Hayward and it is a patchwork. It took three months to design and complete and it is made up of 20,000 hand crafted pieces of cotton fabric. Each one significantly less than one centimetre square.

It measures 1.2 metres by 0.97m and is entitled JQK@JBC (Jack Queen King at Jávea Bridge Club). Further examples of his work can be found at the following website www.accidentalquilter.com

Peter has had numerous exhibitions of his work and this particular piece will shortly be included in a major Spanish national exhibition in Sitges. Thereafter it will return to its most appropriate position in the



Peter Hayward's curious creation

Jávea bridge club.

Bridge players can view this on three playing days each week, with Tuesday now added to the regular Wednesday and Friday schedule. Players wishing to join us on any of these days should contact our general manager Tony Manuel on 685 545 662 or email manager@javeabridge.com



Peter reveals the title

Dementia and bridge

May the fourth be with us

By Tony Myles

Various studies have demonstrated that there is a direct correlation between bridge and a significant reduction in the onset of dementia. The University of California in particular took two lots of equivalent subjects over a 12-month period and their tests demonstrated that the group engaged in bridge suffered a 75% lower deterioration than the regular group.

Prof M C Diamond from the University of California, Berkeley, also reported earlier research results which revealed: "Playing bridge lowers a chance of developing Alzheimer disease by as much as 75%."

This is significant for all sufferers of dementia in whatever form and also for their family and friends who are often the ones who are most affected.

We are doing something about it

Over the next few weeks, The Jávea Bridge Club will be

working hard to raise awareness and funds for two charities who are directly involved in the support of dementia/Alzheimer's sufferers and their families. Then on May 4 we will open our club doors to anyone who wants to join us for a full day of bridge.

Plus we will happily welcome players who prefer some other activity, such as backgammon, chess, ludo and whist - provided you arrive with a sponsorship form and the promise of some funds for our most deserving charities, HELP of Marina Alta and AFA - Alzheimer's association - day centre in Teulada.

How can you help?

We will provide a sponsorship form to anyone who will support us in this project. Do



you want to join us on the day? Get in touch and let us reserve a space and a time for you.

If you and your friends play any type of game then bring it along with as many people as you wish. Get sponsored and enjoy the day, whilst raising funds for two amazing local charities.

Everyone is welcome

If you don't play games but believe that this is important, just come along and have a coffee.

Playing bridge won't prevent dementia but it will slow it down. That is worth telling as many people as possible.

May the fourth be with us

For further details please send us an email to may4th@javeabridge.com

Photos: Help MA, AFA and JBC



Advertising feature

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The leading LIFESTYLE Exhibition dedicated to showcasing products and services on the Costa's continues to be the go-to platform for our professional businesses and visitors.

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If you would like more information about joining the event and showcasing your business, visit the Suitopia Hotel Calpe to meet us, many of the exhibitors and orientate yourself with the event and capitalise on the pre-event networking experience!

The HG & L Show team are preparing the 2024 Edition. Save the dates for your HOMES, GARDENS & LIFESTYLE SHOW experience on Friday 10th & Saturday 11th May at the SUITOPIA HOTEL Calpe, Costa Blanca North 10.00 – 17.00

This spectacular two-day event is a must to be part of and to visit for inspiring ideas, innovative products and on-trend solutions with fresh ideas from our cast of exhibiting experts. Bursting with local products and services with information on all things A – Z for you, your home, garden, your lifestyle and leisure time plus health and wellbeing advice products and services. It's a great opportunity to find out what's available here on the Costas! **The Costa Blanca News Group will be there, supporting the event and community, bringing you the news and papers!**

A once a year chance to meet over 65+ exhibitors with special show discounts, FREE prize draws and giveaways galore! If you are in BUSINESS you can BOOK A STAND to showcase and promote products and services.

Our Exhibitor PRE-SHOW 'OPEN Afternoon' is at the SUITOPIA Hotel 26.03.2023 15.00 – 19.00

We will keep you posted with the latest news right here in the Costa Blanca News and the Weekly Post. Details on www.gmpromotions.es Facebook - @HomesGardensandLifestyleShow. Tel 695 399 841 or email: gina@gmpromotions.es



Searching for a cure

Optical chain joins forces with diabetes charity to help find a cure for type 1 diabetes

Article and photo supplied by Specsavers Ópticas

Optical chain Specsavers Ópticas has signed an agreement to fundraise for the charity DiabetesCERO throughout 2024, to help them find a cure for type 1 diabetes. They aim to raise over €5,000 for the charity, to fund important research projects in Spain searching for a cure.

During the fundraising period, stores on the Costa del Sol, Costa Blanca and in Mallorca will be taking part in challenges and activities to raise funds. They will also be talking to customers and local residents about diabetic retinopathy, one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in the world.

Nerea Galdos-Little store director of Specsavers Ópticas Marbella explains why they chose DiabetesCERO as their official charity for 2024, 'Diabetes is a very big problem on a global level and one that is growing quickly, with an estimated 537 million people in the world suffering from the disease. This disease is associated with a range of potentially serious health complications, if not correctly controlled.'

'One of these complications, which we're seeing more and more of during eye tests, is diabetic retinopathy. If this is undiagnosed and untreated, this can develop into Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) and cause permanent vision impairment and blindness. The prevalence of DME among people living with type 1 diabetes in Europe is around 8.8% and so we want to support DiabetesCERO to help them find a cure for this disease by pledging to raise €5,000 for the



Manuel Castro Gil (DiabetesCERO) with Nerea Galdos-Little (Specsavers Ópticas Marbella)

charity in 2024.'

'Alongside this, we want to educate and inform people in our community about the link between diabetes and vision loss. We encourage anyone with diabetes to ensure they carefully manage glucose levels to prevent health complications. They should also have regular eye tests, including the latest technology, to check the health of the eyes and identify any nerve damage early, before it affects their vision.'

In Spain there are over 1,000 people diagnosed with type 1 diabetes every year, and most of those are under 15 years old. This is a growing problem, yet its cause is not known and there is no cure. The charity DiabetesCERO wants to change that by funding research projects in Spain to find the cure to type 1 diabetes.

For Isabel Mérida, president of DiabetesCERO: 'the agree-

ment with Specsavers Ópticas is a unique opportunity to put the focus on the prevention of diabetes-related vision problems. People with type 1 diabetes often start daily blood glucose monitoring at a very young age, and in the long run, complications associated with this condition can arise. We must not forget that diabetes is behind the majority of cases of blindness in working age adults in Spain.'

'Moreover, this charity campaign not only focuses on prevention, but goes one step further. A step that for us is crucial: raising awareness of the importance of investing in research to cure a disease that is often invisible to the rest of society, yet has a brutal impact on the families who live with it.'

There are collection tins in all nine Specsavers Ópticas stores in Spain, where donations can be made to help fund vital re-

search into type 1 diabetes. There will also be challenges, activities and events taking place through 2024 which will be available to sponsor and support. Information and sponsorship details can be found on Facebook @Specsavers Ópticas. To find your nearest store to donate, or request a complete eye test, including vital health checks, visit www.specsavers.es

About Specsavers Ópticas
Specsavers Ópticas is an optical group with stores on the Costa Blanca (Calpe, Jávea, Torrevieja, Benidorm, Guardamar del Segura and La Zenia), on the Costa del Sol (Fuengirola and Marbella) and in Mallorca (Santa Ponça). It is committed to helping those with eye health problems to improve their quality of life. To support this goal, they hold regular chari-

table campaigns such as this and offer complete visual health assessments as part of their eye tests, free of charge. They believe an eye test should also be a health check, as it can help the optometrists to identify changes in the eye which can be associated with certain treatable eye conditions. Where necessary the optometrist will refer their customers to the correct medical professional to carry out further tests and diagnose conditions before it affects their sight.

Find out more about Specsavers Ópticas via the website www.specsavers.es

About DiabetesCERO

DiabetesCERO is the leading Spanish foundation investing in research into a cure for Type 1 Diabetes. Thanks to the support of thousands of people and companies around the world, they support and finance biomedical research projects to find a cure for this serious, chronic, autoimmune disease, diagnosed mainly in children.

That is why, they work tirelessly every day, to ensure that the scientific community has the resources it needs to advance research. Funding biomedical research with a single purpose: to change the future for millions of families. Supporting scientific talent through grants for young researchers. And raising awareness of the importance of investing in quality research in order to advance as a society.

For more information about DiabetesCERO visit www.diabetescero.org

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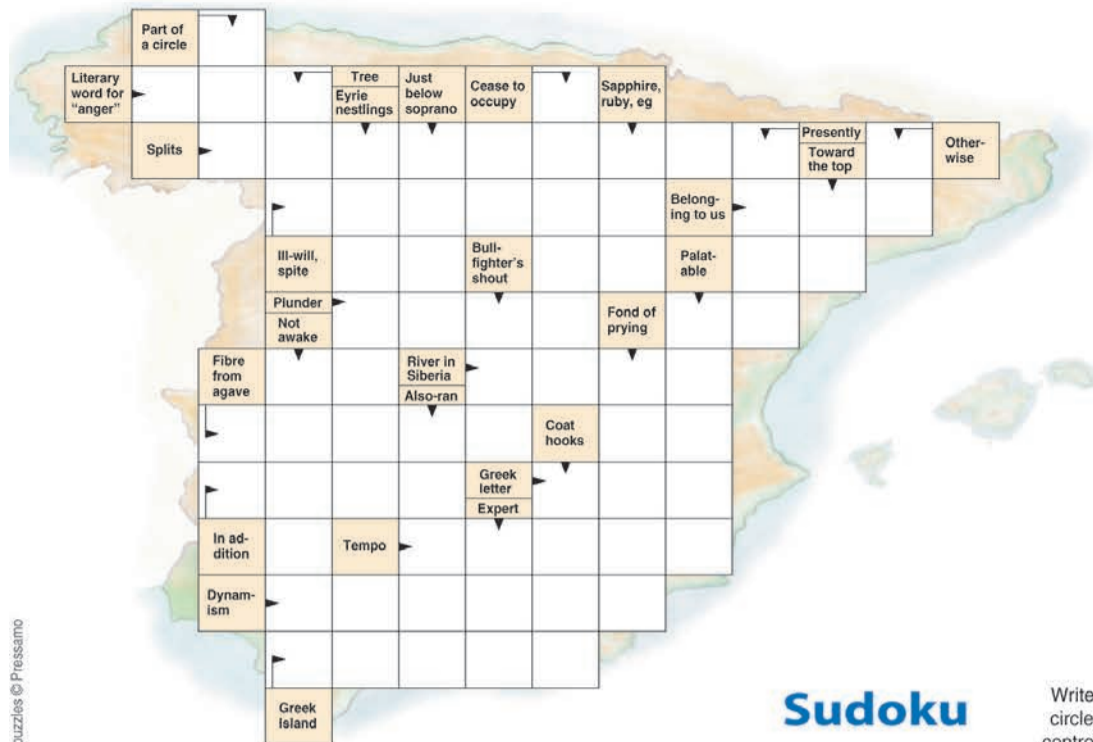
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For more information contact Lyn Baerfuss.
 Tel: 692 059 257
 by email: lynbaerfuss@gmail.com

THE WEARY WARRIORS



All puzzles © Pressimo

The idea is to place a number into each box so that each horizontal row, each vertical column, and each small 9-box square within the larger square, contains all the numbers 1 to 9 just once.

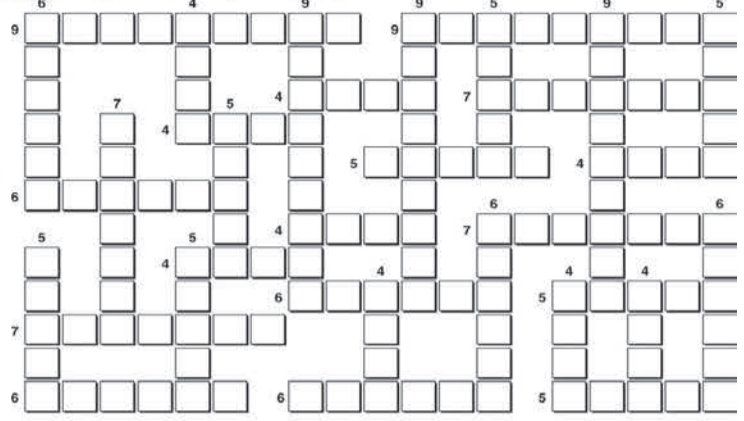
Easy								
4		5		8		9		7
7			4	5			3	2
	9				1			
		3	9			4	6	5
		8				1		
2	5	9			6	3		
			2				4	
8	1			9	3			6
5		6		1		7		3

Fiendish								
	7	1			9	8		
8			4	1		3		
				2			5	
	8					6		
3	5						8	1
		4						9
	6			7				
		8		9	2			3
		9	5			7	6	

Sudoku

KrissKross

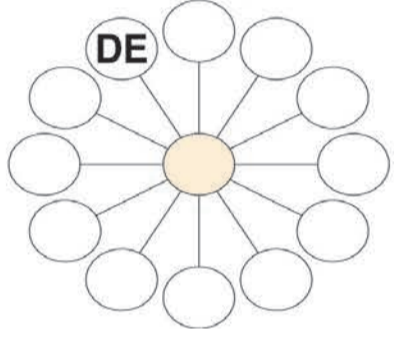
- 4 Letters: AREA, ATUN, AYER, DIAL, LAXO, LIGA, NUBE, PONI, RING
- 5 Letters: AJADA, ASPAR, ENANO, GALAN, GUASA, IJADA, RADON, TRAER
- 6 Letters: ADORAR, AZUCAR, BAILAR, CIUDAD, DILEMA, RAPADO, RINCON
- 7 Letters: ACABADO, ALEGRAR, AVENIDA, BELGICA
- 9 Letters: ABANDONAR, AEROSFERA, AJIACEITE, COMPLETAR, ETNOLOGIA



Couplets

Write the listed pairs of letters into the outer circles so that each line running through the centre circle produces a word with an unlisted pair of letters.

- AD - AD - BO - CE - CE - DE - DE - DI - NE - NE - SE - SE

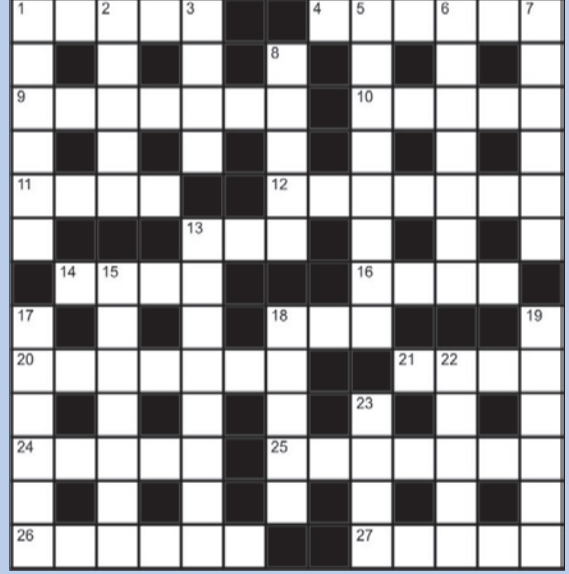


Step by step

Convert the word at the top of the grid to the word at the bottom, by changing one letter at a time.



Crossword



Complete the puzzle using the Cryptic or Regular clues - the answers are the same.

Cryptic clues, Across

- 1 Horrible pains in this country (5)
- 4 Remember to 'phone again (6)
- 9 I cheat learner badly, but it is perfectly right and proper (7)
- 10 Nothing green in the forest, or out in the open (5)
- 11 Take Enid out to eat (4)
- 12 Slips company up on Saturday (7)
- 13 There is something fishy about these eggs (3)
- 14 Eyesore constructed in the last year (4)
- 16 Uncovered knee-deep in hardship (4)
- 18 Group came out of the closet (3)
- 20 Melody put in the post, the fast post that is (7)
- 21 Angry famous statue is returned (4)
- 24 Lived in abnormally lewd time (5)
- 25 One who made an impression at one time (7)
- 26 The great unwashed in the services (6)

27 Put off Peter swapping a new penny for an old one (5)

Down

- 1 The starting price finishes, but still hands over the money (6)
- 2 Like the female bird, anaemic looking (5)
- 3 It's pleasant in the South of France, apparently (4)
- 5 Persuasive, in a manner of speaking (8)
- 6 Name one hybrid windflower (7)
- 7 At least missing the article brings one up to date (6)
- 8 Identify a palace without an American in it (5)
- 13 Pear tree chopped down for jousting (8)
- 15 Sailor understands the aims (7)
- 17 Hit and miss or damn silly (6)
- 18 Mistakes made on the cricket field (5)
- 19 He gets the money for the porter (6)
- 22 The 10th month and the French call it eight! (5)
- 23 Sort of affectionate (4)

Regular clues

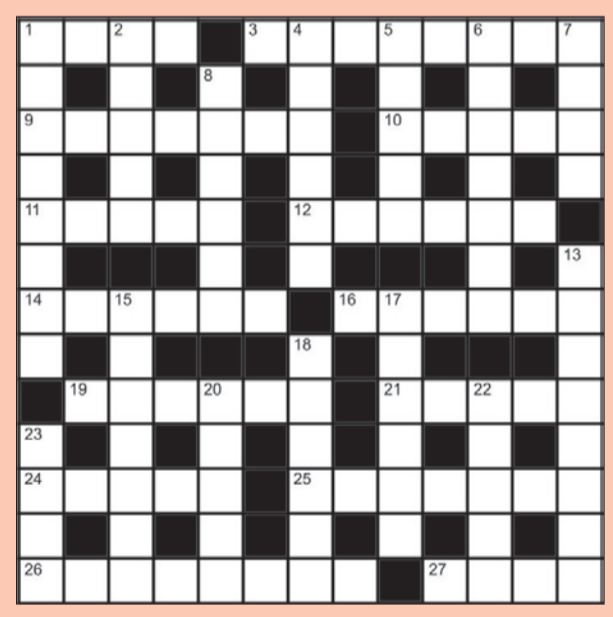
Across

- 1 European country (5)
- 4 Remember (6)
- 9 Honourable (7)
- 10 Open (5)
- 11 Feed (4)
- 12 Vouchers (7)
- 13 Fish eggs (3)
- 14 Eye infection (4)
- 16 Require (4)
- 18 Arrange (3)
- 20 Rapid postal system (7)
- 21 Painful (4)
- 24 Lived (5)
- 25 Pressman (7)
- 26 Bodies of matter (6)
- 27 Discourage (5)

Down

- 1 Pays out (6)
- 2 Bloodless (5)
- 3 Pleasant (4)
- 5 Silver-tongued (8)
- 6 Type of buttercup (7)
- 7 Most recent (6)
- 8 Put (5)
- 13 Wittiness (8)
- 15 Goals (7)
- 17 Haphazard (6)
- 18 Slides (5)
- 19 Carrier (6)
- 22 Eightsome (5)
- 23 Genial (4)

Spanish-English crossword



Improve your vocabulary with our Spanish/English crossword. The clues are in Spanish and the answers are in English.

Across

- 1 Último (4)
- 3 Ceniceros (8)
- 9 Oraciones (7)
- 10 Insignia (5)
- 11 Tema (5)
- 12 Once (6)
- 14 Capilla (6)
- 16 Lección (6)
- 19 Imperio (6)
- 21 Toalla (5)
- 24 Abril (5)
- 25 Corredores (7)
- 26 Estresado (8)
- 27 Pregunta (4)

Down

- 1 Lápiz de labios (8)
- 2 Sombra (5)
- 4 Sistema (6)
- 5 Mesa (5)
- 6 Dirección (7)
- 7 Semilla (4)
- 8 Suprimir (6)
- 13 Análisis (8)
- 15 Admirador (7)
- 17 Comiendo (6)
- 18 Grado (6)
- 20 Islas (5)
- 22 Malas hierbas (5)
- 23 Días (4)

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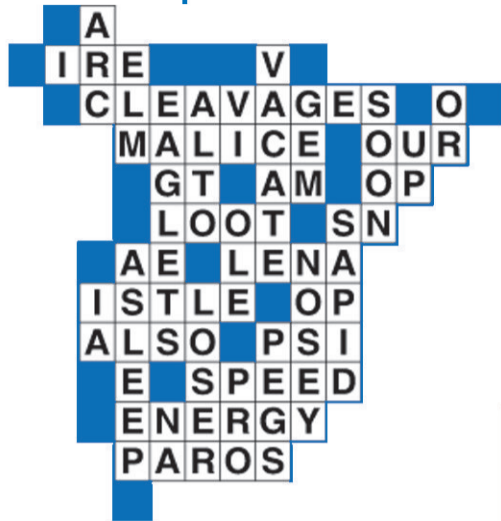
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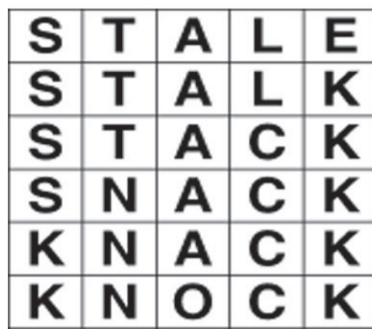


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Shape



Step by step



Couplets

DEVISE, DEVICE, BOVINE, ADVICE, DIVINE, ADVISE

KrissKross



Crossword

Across: : 1 Spain, 4 Recall, 9 Ethical, 10 Overt, 11 Dine, 12 Coupons, 13 Roe, 14 Stye, 16 Need, 18 Set, 20 Airmail, 21 Sore, 24 Dwelt, 25 Printer, 26 Masses, 27 Deter.
Down: 1 Spends, 2 Ashen, 3 Nice, 5 Eloquent, 6 Anemone, 7 Latest, 8 Place, 13 Repartee, 15 Targets, 17 Random, 18 Slips, 19 Bearer, 22 Octet, 23 Kind.

Sudoku easy

4	6	5	3	8	2	9	1	7
7	8	1	4	5	9	6	3	2
3	9	2	6	7	1	5	8	4
1	7	3	9	2	8	4	6	5
6	4	8	5	3	7	1	2	9
2	5	9	1	4	6	3	7	8
9	3	7	2	6	5	8	4	1
8	1	4	7	9	3	2	5	6
5	2	6	8	1	4	7	9	3

Sudoku fiendish

2	7	1	3	5	9	8	4	6
8	9	5	4	1	6	3	7	2
4	3	6	7	2	8	1	5	9
9	8	7	2	4	1	6	3	5
3	5	2	9	6	7	4	8	1
6	1	4	8	3	5	2	9	7
5	6	3	1	7	4	9	2	8
7	4	8	6	9	2	5	1	3
1	2	9	5	8	3	7	6	4

Spanish-English Crossword

Across: 1 Last, 3 Ashtrays, 9 Prayers, 10 Badge, 11 Theme, 12 Eleven, 14 Chapel, 16 Lesson, 19 Empire, 21 Towel, 24 April, 25 Runners, 26 Stressed, 27 Asks.
Down: 1 Lipstick, 2 Shade, 4 System, 5 Table, 6 Address, 7 Seed, 8 Delete, 13 Analysis, 15 Admirer, 17 Eating, 18 Degree, 20 Isles, 22 Weeds, 23 Days.

Pets' Corner

Animal Angells

KITTENS These four brothers and sisters are without names and are looking out for a new loving home. They all get on well with all our other cats and kittens and like nothing more than a toy to play with and a cuddle.



Animal Angells have many incredible cats and kittens that are in need of loving homes. All cats / kittens are vaccinated, blood tested and will be neutered (once old enough).

So, if you or someone you know would like a new little friend then please call Sue from Animal Angells on 696 103 092. Please make 2024 a better year for these lovely cats and kittens.

Aldea Felina



Denia Cat Protection League (Aldea Felina). <http://www.aldeafelina.es> Many loving, playful and cuddly cats are at the shelter. Like the cute little **GATOKIO** here.

Most have gone through their health checks and are ready for adoption. They urgently need a real home and are looking forward to your visit.

For adopting GaTokio or any of our other cats, please call or send a WhatsApp for an appointment to 669 376 113 or send an email to aldea@aldeafelina.es

PEPA

MORK and **MINDY** are siblings born mid-December 2023.

Mork (left) is a handsome tabby more grey in colour with a soft and furry coat and Mindy (right) a cute girl with a more golden colour. They are both tortoiseshell cats. Both cats have been brought up together in a home with other cats and are litter trained and domesticated. We are looking for a forever home either together or separately.

Would you like to add them to your family then please contact Pepa on 650 304 746, email p.e.p.a.animalcharity@gmail.com or see the website www.pepaspain.com



BARC CRISTA is a sweet gorgeous six-month-old Spaniel (Bretón), found wandering on her own. All attempts to find the owner have failed so she is now looking for her forever loving home. Crista is super friendly and gives lots of love. She is full of puppy energy, playfulness, fun and mischief. She loves to go for walks and is very good on a lead. Crista is very good with other dogs. Like any puppy she needs lots of training and direction, but she is very quick to learn and eager to please. She will make the most amazing family addition. Crista is just starting her vaccinations. She will have a passport so will be able to travel once all her vaccinations are complete.

For more information contact Sue at BARC via WhatsApp on +34 643 802 300.

K9 Club

TRIGGER is a 7-year-old large dog. He is so affectionate, good on a lead and very obedient and would make a great companion. He is house trained and has come from a loving home. Trigger has a passport and is fully vaccinated

Can anyone please give Trigger another safe and loving family home? Contact us at the shelter if you would like to come and meet him. Call or WhatsApp on 711 075 305.



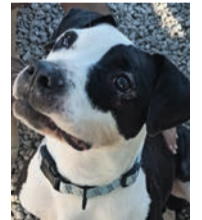
APAD THILO is a charming mixed-breed dog awaiting his ticket to happiness in the animal shelter. He is a true gentleman on the leash.. His intelligent nature seeks mental challenges, and he radiates with joy when it comes to playing and learning together. Towards people, Thilo is an open book of love and affection. If you're looking for a loyal life companion don't hesitate any longer.

Please contact APAD on 966 427 678, email to info@apad-apad.org or see www.apad-apad.org



AKIRA ROCKY 4, was surrendered

through no fault of his own and is good with female dogs but not keen on cats and we recommend children over 11. Rocky has been in a foster rehabilitation home as he finds the shelter very difficult with all the noise and change and he really misses having a forever sofa. Please call 657 689 567 or send an email to akirashelter@aol.com



CARMEN Female, shelter since 03.04.21. American pitbull DOB 15.04.14 – Large

Carmen is a beautiful dog and as is normal with her breed, very strong. Very good with people. She has to be the only pet in the household - she doesn't get along with other dogs or cats.

The new owners would have to know the breed, and obtain a special PPP licence and a secure home with fenced garden is a must. No children. For more info contact APASA - 96 646 3976.

Five unusual herbs to grow

By Hannah Stephenson, PA
Forget parsley and mint, try growing bergamot, lemon grass and sweet cicely to perk up your dishes.

Want to add some herbs to dishes that aren't so run-of-the-mill?

There are so many easy-to-grow herbs which are overlooked, says award-winning herb expert, designer and author Jekka McVicar.

Many of these are detailed in her latest book, *100 Herbs To Grow*, a comprehensive guide to the best herbs. Here, she suggests five herbs which gardeners who want to be slightly more adventurous might grow.

1. Hyssop

"This is an absolute must-have. Apart from the fact that it's stunningly beautiful when in flower and the bees adore it, it's a member of the Lamiaceae family (which includes mint, sage, thyme, oregano, basil, rosemary and lavender)," she enthuses.

The flowers of this hardy perennial are generally blue and purple, but there is also a pink variety and a white one too. Flowers are edible and have a slightly minty flavour, or you can make a tea with the leaves, with a generous teaspoon of honey.

"The leaf makes a fantastic salad dressing and will grow in exactly the same place as your sage and thyme. It goes really well with

tomatoes in a pasta sauce. It just adds a slightly different flavour to a dish."

Top tip: Grow it in a sunny position in a well-drained, neutral-to-alkaline soil. You may need to add grit to the soil as hyssop will die if waterlogged. It's a great companion plant for cabbages as it lures away the cabbage white butterfly.

2. Myrtle

McVicar uses the aromatic dark leaves of this fragrant evergreen shrub in her cooking as you would use bay, adding them to stews, soups and sauces, before removing and discarding them.

"The white flowers are stunning. It's the herb of love, Aphrodite's herb. They are followed by black berries, which you can make myrtle gin from, as we would make sloe gin," she says.

Top tip: Plant it in full sun in a well-drained soil. Too much wet will kill it, as will cold winds, so plant it against a south or west-facing wall and don't overfeed it or it won't flower. Protect it from frost and wet weather in winter, making sure that your container is lifted on to bricks if it's in a pot.

3. Monarda fistulosa (wild bergamot)

Monarda fistulosa has a mauve leaf and the flowers look like a lady's fancy summer wedding hat, McVi-



Photo: Alamy, PA

car reckons.

"I use the petals of that flower in salads. It's glorious. They have a warm, minty, spicy flavour, again they are part of the Lamiaceae family."

Native to North America, this perennial plant has spreading rhizome roots which grow to 1m (3ft) tall and the leaves can be used

to make a spicy tea.

"It's very easy to grow in a well-drained soil and although they are slightly rhizomatous they are not invasive," she says. "They are glorious in flower and you could easily grow it as an ornamental. It's known as bee balm because it's good for bees and other pollinators. You also get the seedheads which finches adore in the autumn."

Top tip: Grow it in well-drained soil in a sunny spot and dig up plants over three years old, removing the dead centre and replanting in a prepared site.

4. Lemon grass (Cymbopogon citratus)

You can grow it from seed, sowing indoors in spring in prepared seed trays or modules on a frost-free windowsill.

Often used to add fragrance to Thai curries and other South East Asian dishes, keep it in indoors in the winter and put outside in

the summer. Pick the leaves when they are young.

"You can make tea with the leaf. You just chop it into small pieces and add boiled – not boiling – water and it is so refreshing. Or you can have it cold in summer, and make ice cubes with the tea, which go really well in a gin and tonic."

Top tip: Use it as a container plant, McVicar suggests, using a loam-based compost, and don't let it dry out in summer. In the winter bring it indoors into a frost-free environment.

5. Sweet cicely (Myrrhis odorata)

This native herbaceous perennial which resembles cow parsley is our natural sugar herb, McVicar explains.

The leaves start pushing through now, when you're cooking it, and you can cut down your sugar by about three quarters. When you crush the leaf, it has a sweet aniseed flavour."

The leaves can be chopped and used in salads, or added to soups and stews, while the roots can be cooked as a vegetable and served with butter, or eaten raw, grated and used in French dressing.

Top tip: The plant can be invasive so choose carefully where you plant it.

100 Herbs To Grow by Jekka McVicar is published by Hardie Grant.

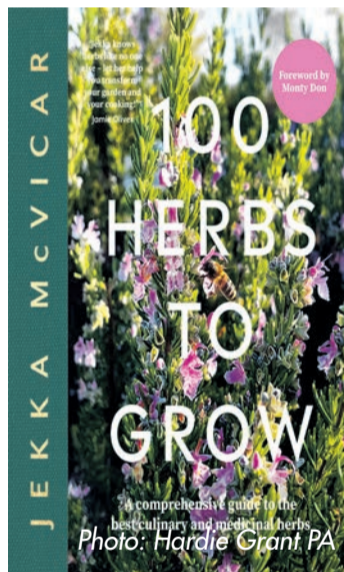


Photo: Hardie Grant PA

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Sporting Alfas Cricket Club meet visiting Nomads

By Kevin Laundon

On a very blustery Friday at the Woodbridge Oval Albir, Sporting Alfas XL team entertained the Nomads CC for their 29th bi-annual tournament.

The toss was won by Alfas, and, mainly due to lack of players available, invited Nomads to have a bat. The opportunity gave the opponents a chance to go big in the runs column. The home side's bowlers had a different idea, and the early batsmen found our home wicket advantage difficult to get the hang of.

Olufawu was the first to go, with Wakefield, Al- Durroji and Hussey following him back to the tea hut. With a total of 10 overs gone and the score only on 52 with four men out, could the home side snatch a win? T Patel and his uncle N Patel turned the game into a very one-sided affair and the next 25 overs were dispatched to all corners.

Nephew and uncle reached centuries inside the allotted overs and with a quick fire 27 from Naman Paropkari the visitors ended on 284.

The fantastic tea and cake supplied by the crew in the hut gave both sets of players the opportunity to relax before what was going to be an uphill slog for the home team.

On loan opener Zia Ul Qayyum walked in and walked out just as quickly. Waqar Ashraf joined J Perman and the pair took the score up to 67 with Perman the dominant partner before giving his wicket to Johnston on 50. Chris Cooper, on his come-



back to the XL 11, joined W Ashraf and the score board ticked along nicely, with W Ashraf now becoming the dominant player and Cooper contributing 12 in the partnership. Tyrone Maylon made a good case for being in at five, but the run rate required was reaching an impossible rate, he gave it ago, 23 before nicking behind. Waqar Ashraf fell after reaching his maiden century, many congratulations on reaching this milestone. Tom Scott fell on five so Braithwaite saw off the last three balls with his usual gait and shout of: "No-run," with the ever smiling J Powl standing at the other end. Sporting Alfas ended on 213 in a very respectable run chase.

Sunday

On a beautiful day at the Woodbridge oval, Sporting Alfas CC (SACC) went about the task of levelling up the

weekend after the down pour on Saturday wiped out the match. Winning the toss and electing to bat first, SACC started off slowly and in the sixth over skipper Laundon edged behind to become the first victim for the tourists. Shakeel Hafiz went LBW to the same bowler in his next over, leaving SACC on 14 for two. It soon became 25 for three, then 39 for five. Byrne (8), Powl (10) and Khan (0) all giving into Papankira's slow but accurate bowling. Iqbal joined Maylon out in the middle and with the visitors easing off the pressure, probably regretfully, took the score along to 100 in the 22nd over and up to 136, before Iqbal fell to the ever-green and deadly Hussey, out for 40, a great effort. Unamuno helped things along with a hard hit 21 runs and Gujjar in his second

match finally hit a couple, but fell to the deadly slow loop of Hussey. Last man Gregory walked in with eight overs left, and he and Tyrone Maylon took the score past 200, with Maylon reaching his maiden century for Sporting Alfas, but the one run for Gregory from 29 balls was the real achievement.

With a total of 215 to win for the extremely strong batting line-up of Nomads CC, the Sporting Alfas bowlers now needed to concentrate on line and length to give the home side any chance of victory. Iqbal and Khan were given the new ball and carried out the task with great relish and, more importantly, accuracy. After Fridays run fest, the visitors struggled along at only three an over and lost wickets regularly, 49 for two at the point when tea was taken in the 15th over -

a little behind the run rate but plenty of batters left in the hut.

Tea as always was a fine affair and appreciated by all the players.

The introduction of Shakeel Hafiz to replace the bowled-out Iqbal (1-29-8 great figures), was the absolute turning point in the day's play. Hafiz returned figures of seven overs, 10 runs for five wickets, which left him and Maylon very even in the man of the match category. Powl bowled out with respectful figures of one wicket for 37 from his eight. With only one wicket left, the captain gave the ball to newcomer Gujjar, and after his first ball missed everything, he settled down and the batsmen showed him real respect returning figures of zero for 16 from five overs. Byrne (0-15-2), Maylon (0-10-3) and Laundon (0-3-2) finished of the match with Sporting Alfas running out easy winners - which before play had started was not forecasted. Real bad luck to the Nomads' batsman Nigel Hussey who was not out on 48 alongside the ever-chatty Kevin Smith who ended the day unbeaten on 10.

Sporting Alfas are looking forward to part two of the bi-annual contest between the two clubs in October, when the mighty Nomads return.

Sporting Alfas Cricket Club will be playing again this Saturday, March 16 at their home ground in Albir in a friendly match against Levante CC. Start time is 13.00.

Photo: SACC



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