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THEY WILL ALWAYS BE MISSED AND NEVER FORGOTTEN

HUNDREDS OF friends and family, English and Spanish, attended the funeral of Lorraine and Lauren Cullen in L'Oliveria. On October 9th the mother and daughter were washed away by flood water as they attempted to cross a bridge in the village, Lauren's twin sister, Samantha and friend Gemma survived the accident. The family moved to L'Oliveria in 2003 from Brighton where dad Mark is a roofer. He was comforted by his grieving sons Daniel, 22, and Darren, 19, and Samantha, 14 at the service on October 14th. The bodies of Lorraine, 47 and her daughter were repatriated to the UK for a full funeral in their hometown.

The village of L'Oliveria has recently experienced some of the heaviest rainfall for many years. At the height of the deluge, during the evening of Thursday October 9th, Lorraine Cullen together with her 14 year old twin daughters, Lauren and Samantha and a school friend, Gemma had been visiting friends in the village. Forty eight year old Lorraine had decided they should return to the family home a kilometre from the village during a brief respite in the torrential rain. Two hundred metres before reaching the safety and comfort of their home, the young family has to cross a narrow bridge barely wide enough for one vehicle, over a normally dry river bed. Whilst the old concrete bridge was still sound, the flood water from the surrounding hills had washed heavy rocks and branches down into the gully leading to the bridge. This debris, along with debris from a storm some months earlier which had not been cleared by the local authority, caused the small tunnel under the bridge to completely block up. Subsequently the flood water surged over the top of the bridge to a depth of approximately 50 centimetres.

Not wishing to attempt the crossing in the family's petrol car, Lorraine and the girls decided they would join hands and wade across in order to attend to the family's dogs and cats that the girls were starting to worry about. Soon after starting to cross the four were overwhelmed by the force of the water and rocks and boulders which were swept along with the flood. After being swept off the bridge the group were then in raging flood water up to 2 ½ metres deep with rocks, branches and over hanging trees impeding their struggle for survival.

One of Lorraine's daughters Samantha, known to everyone as Sam, bravely fought her way through the torrent and reached her friend Gemma. She then pulled Gemma to safety and returned for mother and sister, Lauren. In the short time that had elapsed, Lorraine and Lauren had been swept further downstream, way beyond Sam's reach. Sam then climbed the wet and muddy bank up from the gully in the pitch darkness and heavy rain in an attempt to reach the nearest house and raise the alarm. She was successful and the Guardia Civil arrived in the village shortly after. The ensuing search and rescue operation later recovered their bodies 1½ kilometres further down stream. When found, the loving mother and daughter were still clinging together in a last embrace, inseparable in death as they always had been in life. Lorraine's husband, Mark Cullen, with their two sons, Darren (19) and Daniel (22) have for some time been working in England and regularly commuting back to Spain to support the family. Mark and the boys, closely followed by Lorraine's sister and family friends started to arrive in Spain on the Friday morning. Support and assistance for the remaining family has been superb, coming from both the small Brit community and the Spanish also, with whom the family has many friends and were well respected. A memorial service was held in the church in L'Oliveria on the afternoon of Tuesday 14th October where around 500 friends and relatives joined the remaining family to say goodbye. The British Consul in Alicante had been advised by the Guardia Civil of the situation and responded promptly, offering assistance and counselling with the complicated procedures involved with transporting the bodies back to England for a full family funeral. In order to help with huge and unforeseen expenditure that Mr Mark Cullen now has to face, an appeal has been organised. To contribute to this fund please go to Bancaja in L'Oliveria and mention 'Mark Cullen and family'; the staff know what to do. The whole community is shocked and saddened by the loss of a vibrant mother and young daughter, about whom nobody had anything other than the utmost respect. They will always be missed and never forgotten.

By Tom Witham

L'Oliveria

COCENTAINA FAIR

The Cocentina Fair celebrates its 662nd anniversary and is noted as being one of the most popular amongst tourists in the Comunidad. More than 700 exhibitors will display their goods and skills at the medieval Market including the Arab souk, food, arts and crafts and music.

October 27 & 28

Children's Day: reduced prices on rides

October 31

10.30am - Official opening in Plaza de la Vila.

Midday - 'Sophia'; Entertainment show in Patio del Palacio

9pm - 'Dimonis'; stage show with fantastic special effects in Plaza del Pla.

November 1

9am - Traditional 'Fira' breakfast by AMA Association and performance by Cocentina dance group in Pla de la Font.

9pm - 'Dimonis'; show at Plaza del Pla.

11pm - Rock Night at San Juan Bosco I school.

November 2

12pm - Horse Riding and Dressage Exhibition by Peluca Equestrian Center in front of Parque del Ferrocarril.

4pm - Drag and Shot competition in front of Parque del Ferrocarril.

9pm - 'Dimonis'; show in Plaza del Pla.

SWIMMING POOL NOT FIT FOR SWIMMERS

The Bloc Nacionalista Valencià party has denied claims made by Finance councillor, Maria Abad, that Ontinyent swimming pool is now ready to open. According to Bloc sources "We could see that this is not true, it's been a week since the pool was closed because the water temperature dropped below 20 degrees, an insufficient temperature for swimming". The Bloc party insists that any economic issues with the council pool must not be passed on to swimmers using the facilities.

MAN SHOT IN POLICE CHASE

Police shot dead a known criminal as he fled through the streets of 'Horta. The man, known as Salvador, was wanted for a double crime and considered 'very dangerous'. A National Police helicopter tracked Salvador's car as he careered through the streets. In his attempt to flee police Salvador crashed into a parked car and collided with a police officer on a motorcycle, dragging him 20 metres down the road. Another officer opened fire on the car, wounding the driver. Salvador was resuscitated at the scene and transferred to Valencia General Hospital, where he later died from two gunshot wounds to the chest. The 39 year old police officer suffered a fractured to his arm and concussion.

GUIDE TO MUSHROOMS

The Council has published an informative booklet on mushroom picking in the Mariola Mountains. The Department of Environment's "All you need to know about harvesting mushrooms in the Natural Park of the Serra de Mariola," is an informative booklet which contains guidelines for picking mushrooms in the area. The director of the Serra Mariola Natural Park, Raul Jordà said, the aim is to "provide visitors with rules for picking mushrooms so as to limit the environmental impact." Mushroom picking is permitted across the Mariola Natural park, and on the private farms if the owner has given their consent. It is forbidden to remove the soil, either manually or using any type of tool. Only knives up to 11 centimetres in length are allowed. Picking must only be carried out during daylight hours and only mushrooms that have reached full maturity may be harvested. Mushrooms that are damaged or immature must be left in place. Each individual is permitted to pick a maximum of four kilograms per day. Booklets are available at the Information Centre in the Serra de Mariola natural park.

ALZIRA TAX PERIOD COME TO CLOSE

The Finance Department of Alzira Town Hall are requesting that residents pay any outstanding taxes, if they are not paid through direct debit, by December 3rd. Residents can switch to automatic direct debit payments by visiting the Oficina de Recaudacion in Alzira Town Hall from Monday to Friday between 8am - 2pm and Tuesday evenings from 5pm to 7.30pm. For more information call 96 245 92 67 or e-mail alzira.voluntaria@cv.gva.es.

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP

Aielo de Malferit Town hall has opened a workshop for children between the ages of 3 and 9. Kids can enjoy a variety of activities including games, storytelling and reading. Workshops will be open Monday to Friday and qualified personnel will supervise activities in the 'les Escoles Velles' building. Ten vouchers can be purchased for 10 euros which gives one session per child per voucher.

RAIN UNCOVERS HUMAN REMAINS

Heavy rains have uncovered human remains in Agullent, which are thought to be part of a mass grave dating back to the 19th century. A resident in the village discovered the bones in Plaza de España de Agullent near the school. According to Mayor Jesus Pla, "you can see the figure of a man, although there are only bones," he said, "The remains are being reviewed by the forensics team at the moment". This is not the first time remains have been discovered, about ten years ago "residents in the village found human remains in the same area".

SEVEN VILLAS BURGLIED IN ONE NIGHT

A gang raided at least seven villas in just one night on the La Drova urbanization in Barx. During the early hours of October 17th seven properties were broken into and electrical equipment stolen. Residents in the area suspect the group

will return and possibly "have been spying on residents for a while and know which villas are uninhabited. Many people only come here in summer and during holidays," said the President of the Residents Association, Elena Telletxea.

DAY LIGHT ROBBERY

A jewellery store was robbed in broad daylight and the owner badly assaulted. Four individuals entered the shop on Calle Oliver Francisco in Alzira and grabbed valuable jewellery and watches. Owner, 58 year old Ramon, tried to stop them, but was punched in the face and beaten. Ramon's daughter said "They could have killed him, he has been beaten badly. We will not re-open the jewellery shop, we are going to close it. Life, my father and my family are more important". Ramon was taken straight to hospital; his friends and family have said that they couldn't believe what his attackers did to his face, he was unrecognizable.

MAN ARRESTED FOR FAKE KIDNAPPING

A businessman from Aldaia has been arrested by Guardia Civil after faking his own kidnap. Events began, supposedly, on October 14th, when two individuals forced him into a vehicle and forced him to call his family and tell them he had been kidnapped. Police traced a later call to a location in Siete Aguas. The 33 year old man, who is married with one son, was arrested and charged with wasting police time.

NEW BRIDGE TO REDUCE TRAFFIC

Moixent Town Hall plans to build a new bridge to reduce traffic at the main entrance of the town. The new access will be between Hortes Valles and the Polideportivo Municipal Sports centre. The Conselleria has carried out a study of the area and Mayor Vincent Dubalhas announced that, "we hope to know in the next 2 weeks the outcome of the study and whether the bridge is a feasible solution."

BIKERS BACK IN TOWN

The streets of Cheste welcome bikers during the Valencia Motorcycle Grand Prix. Officer numbers will be increased during the 3 day long event as more than 240,000 people are expected to flock to the Ricardo Tormo circuit. The Government's deputy in Valencia, Luis Felipe Martinez, confirmed there will be "450 Guardia Civil officers patrolling the area from October 23rd to ensure the safety and security of everyone attending the event". Security measures have been tightened following deaths during the GP weekend last year.

MAN AND HIS DOG SUFFER SMOKE INHALATION

A man and his dog suffered smoke inhalation after their caravan caught fire in the early hours of October 18th. The caravan, which had been parked in the Fair Precinct in Carcaixent was completely destroyed. Fire-fighters treated the man and his pet at the scene.

PARCENT MASS DEVELOPMENT SLAMMED BY EUROCRATS

VEÏNS de Parcent's campaign against plans to build 1,700 houses in their village has taken a step in the right direction. The three developments have been rejected out of hand by the European Commission and the Confederación Hidrográfica del Júcar.

The latter is responsible for studying the availability of a running water supply for new urbanisations. But a recent report has said there would not be enough of the commodity to go round if Parcent's population increases from its current 1,000 to over 4,300 inhabitants. Already, an environmental impact report by the regional government has condemned the plans for one of the developments, with the remaining two plans waiting to be analysed. MEP David Hammerstein has compiled a list of five urbanisations in the Marina Alta which flout EU regulations, three of which are in Parcent.

WIND IN THE WILLOWS TICKETS NOW ON SALE

ALAN Bennett's adaptation of The Wind in the Willows will be staged in Gata de Gorgos; Unión Musical from December 1-6.

Tickets are now on sale at a price of 12 euros for the popular children's classic, which has remained a favourite despite having first been written a century ago.

Anyone keen to get their hands on a seat for this humorous production by the Jávea Players, starring Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger, should call Mabel Kevan on 96 579 49 37.

OLD BRIDGE COMES DOWN IN EL VERGER

AFTER a year of campaigning by local residents, El Verger has pulled down a bridge that was damaged by last year's floods to build another. Homeowners on the banks of the Girona feared that the bridge's drainage mechanisms were not up to strain if the river burst its banks again. A year ago, the "Almàspera bridge was completely underwater.

Now, however, it is being taken down to build a more modern one in its place.

THE SUN SHINES ON THE RIGHTEOUS IN THE VALL DE GALLINERA

A NATURAL phenomenon that is only seen once a year brought residents out en masse to the Vall de Gallinera. Near the small hamlet of Benitaia, a narrow hole in the mountainside lets the sun shine directly through it once every twelve months.

The valley is famous for this feature, which produces a straight beam of light at a certain point in the day in early autumn. This year, the sun's rays shone through the hole in the rockface on October 4 and 5, causing villagers and those from further afield to flock to the valley to admire it.

ELS POBLETS ACTION GROUP THANKS PROTESTORS

ELS Poblets residents have demanded a public explanation from the mayor as to why council taxes are set to rocket in 2009. Following the town's recent protest march against IBI payments doubling and rubbish collection charges being levied for the first time, leaders of action group Gent dels Poblets have publicly thanked all those who took part. Stephen Rutledge and Harm Kah, who led the demonstration, have presented a letter to the mayor signed by 580 residents. They asked for a response within a week of handing it in, but say they have not heard anything to date. The group wants a meeting with the mayor, to which all townspeople are invited, explaining why rates are set to rise and how the council intends to deal with its enormous budget deficit. Rutledge says he considers that "as taxpayers and citizens", this information is "simply our right."

DISABLED TEEN TURNED AWAY FROM SCHOOL

PARENTS of a brave teenager who was left a quadriplegic after a motorbike accident have hit out at a Pego schools refusal to teach him. Iván Alemany Puchol wanted to study the Enric Valor high school's information technology course by correspondence, as his condition means he is unable to attend class. His parents say he is keen to get on with his life, despite being in a wheelchair and only able to move his head. They stress that he completed his ESO "Spain's answer to GCSEs" even after the accident 18 months ago.

He then applied to take the computer course whilst still in a quadriplegic hospital in Toledo. But having recently been discharged, the youngster "who lives in Alpatró in the Vall de Gallinera" has been turned away.

"We do not have the facilities to offer our courses via distance learning," says a spokesperson from the school.

"His parents should just be grateful we held his place on the course open for him, which we did as a favour."

BRAVE OFFICERS RESCUE EXPATRIATES FROM DANGEROUS CURRENT

TWO expatriates were saved from drowning in choppy waters off La Fustera beach last week. Since then, their heroic rescuers "two Local Police officers" have been awarded a medal for their bravery. Without stopping to think, they dived into the sea off the Benissa beach and pulled the 47-year-old German woman and her son, 21, to safety. They did not call the coastguard to carry out the rescue operation, since they said there was not a minute to spare and the victims were seconds away from drowning.

The woman's son had gone into the water to save his mother, and then found he could not swim against the current. Policemen José Alberto Martínez and Manolo Risueño received a standing ovation from worried crowds when they returned to dry land.

Accepting their medals from Benissa town council during a ceremony this week, they said "any one of our colleagues would have done the same."

POLICE "WILL NOT GIVE UP" UNTIL THEY FIND POLOP'S MAYOR'S MURDERER
THE brutal murder of Polop's mayor a year ago remains under investigation, states MP for Alicante, Encarna Llinares. She says Guardia Civil officers in the province and special investigators in Madrid "will not give up" until they find the killer.

According to the MP, investigations have drawn a blank since the mayor was shot in autumn 2007, but the probe will continue until the person who shot Alejandro Ponsoda is brought to justice. Llinares says the full weight of the law will fall on the guilty party.

At present, police are not ruling out any possible motive for the mayor's killing.

RAT INFESTATION TERRIFIES WORKERS

STAFF in the strong-room of Dénia district court have threatened to down tools over an infestation of rats. One horrified employee said she found a mother rat and a nest of babies when she opened a box last week. Workers insist that they would not complain if it were just "the occasional appearance" of a rat in the filing room, since this is normal in old buildings used for storage. But they say there is literally "a pack of them" making nests among the files and chewing up important papers. Many employees are now too scared to go to work. They have reported the matter to the Council of Justice, the health and safety at work committee, and one of Spain's major unions, the CCOO.

A representative from the latter has visited the court's archive room and criticised the "appalling" state of the building. He says the toilets do not flush, some of the taps will not turn off, and the staircases are broken and dangerous.

The union representative also pointed out that the CCTV camera is hanging off the wall, and merely films the floor.

LIGHTNING LEAVES RESIDENTS WITHOUT WATER

A LIGHTNING strike left residents in La Font d'En Carròs without water for a day and a half during the recent freak storms. The strike affected the electrical transformer that controls the main water deposit for the village last Friday at noon.

It meant residents in the town centre and on the urbanisation Tossal Gros had no running water for 36 hours. Councillor for Works and Services, Salvador Àngel, says authorities took every measure possible to get residents back on tap. He says they attempted to use a privately-owned well, agreeing to pay the owner for the water until the breakdown was

fixed. The repair work, says Ángel, was the responsibility of waterboard Acuagest. But residents were furious, complaining that the water supply network is deficient at the best of times. President of the Tossal Gros residents' association, Pilar Martínez, says the previous mayoress had said in the past that up to 60 per cent of the water leaks out of the pipe mechanisms.

She says residents on the urbanisation pay water rates three times those of inhabitants in the town itself, but 'receive a much worse service'.

IBI COMES DOWN FOR HOMEOWNERS IN BENITATXELL

COUNCIL tax is set to fall for property owners in Benitatxell.

A recent council meeting led to the decision to reduce IBI, or annual asset tax, by 15 per cent next year. A discount of 50 per cent will be offered to households with large families. Those who use 'green' energy, such as solar-powered electricity, will also be given 25 off their annual bill. Payments of the annual tax may be spread over ten months in most cases. However, rubbish-collection rates will go up next year.

Councillors explained that dustmen are currently on very poor wages, meaning a six per cent increase in the tax will go towards offering them a pay-rise.

FONTILLES CELEBRATES A CENTURY OF CARING FOR LEPROSY PATIENTS

A HUNDRED years on from the opening of Fontilles' leprosy hospital, parade members from Alcoy's Moors and Christians paid tribute to its valuable work on Sunday.

During the processions, they carried banners in honour of the San Francisco de Borja sanctuary, which will have been open for a century in January 2009.

They also paid a visit to the charity hospital in the Vall de Laguar and had lunch with workers, patients and volunteers. To mark the centenary, an exhibition will be held early next year with the backing of Bancaja and a documentary filmed on their labour.

Leprosy, predominantly a third-world disease, is a debilitating and highly contagious condition that leaves sufferers with missing limbs and often being ostracised by society.

But the Fontilles sanctuary's work includes research, rehabilitation and counselling, and aims to help its sufferers integrate into mainstream society.

FLOODS CLAIM ANOTHER LIFE

A 7 month old baby was dragged from her mother's arms by flood water after the family's car became stuck. A 27 year old mother was travelling between Maestrat and Peñíscola, with her three children - 7 months, 6 and 8 years, when they became cut off by flood water. As they crossed the barranca on foot the 6 year old stumbled and as his mother tried to save him, the baby was wrenched from her arms. Fire crews and volunteers began an immediate search of the area, but the body of the baby was not discovered until the early hours of the morning almost a kilometre away. The accident comes just a week after Lorraine and Lauren Cullen drowned whilst attempting to cross a flooded bridge in L'Olleria, Valencia.

RUBBISH TAXES UP FOR RESIDENTS & BUT NOT FOR BUSINESSES

DÉNIA residents are to see their rubbish collection fees go up by ten per cent next year.

But companies in the town will escape this increase, which only affects private individuals. A further nine euros is to be added to the annual refuse tax, in order for the council to amass more income without having to impose inflated IBI rates on properties.

Councillors say the reason the move will not affect businesses is to avoid putting additional financial pressure on them and to help them survive the credit crunch.

MARKET MOVES IN DÉNIA

DÉNIA Monday market has been temporarily re-sited due to two weeks of fiestas either side of All Saints' Day. Instead of the usual Torrecremada location near Mercadona and the hospital, the market will now take place on Avinguda Joan Fuster with immediate effect. The new location will be used this Monday, October 27; November 3, and November 10. After this, the market will move back to its usual site.

RESIDENTS SLAM YACHT MARINA PLANS IN PICTURESQUE COVE

BENITATXELL residents are horrified over plans to build a new yacht marina on their only beach. The shore, comprising Cala del Moraig and Cala de Llebeig, is under European Union protection law preventing it from being built on.

But local authorities have provisionally approved development plans for a leisure port.

Despite the beach's popularity with residents and holidaymakers for its privacy and outstanding natural beauty, councillors are keen to push the project ahead.

The unique features of these neighbouring coves include the picturesque Cova dels Arcs, and the deepest underground river on the Iberian peninsula.

When the news broke earlier this week, residents were said to be 'stunned' and 'outraged'. 'It's the only beach we have and they're going to ruin it,' said one local resident.

'FLYING'; SPEEDBOAT FOUND ON TOP OF BREAKWATER

CURIOUS crowds gathered round a breakwater in Dénia port on Saturday when they discovered a speedboat sitting on top of it. Its owner and sole occupant, an industrial engineer, was on his way from Valencia to Moraira when the craft apparently leapt out of the water and landed on top of the wave-breaker. Despite the impact on top of the rocks, the 13-metre auto-pilot yacht was barely marked. However, thieves emptied the craft of its valuables before authorities were able to tow it back to dry land around lunchtime, taking a marine sat-nav and various electrical goods valued at

thousands of euros.

The yacht's occupant was taken to hospital where he needed stitches for a cut in his head.

N-332 PROSTITUTES; CAPTOR FACES JAIL

A MAN who reportedly lured two girls to Spain from his native Romania and then forced them to work as prostitutes to pay back their airfare; faces more than 20 years in jail if found guilty. He is said to have brought them to Dénia on the basis of a well-paid job in a butcher's shop. But once they arrived, the accused is thought to have forced them to work in a brothel on the N-332 in El Verger. The brothel's owner, also Romanian, is believed to have charged commission for the use of his facilities. He faces trial this week along with the girls; captor. Prosecutors heard that when the girls refused to work as sex-slaves, they were beaten and raped. Their kidnapper also threatened to kill their families back home. However, the girls managed to escape the brothel after just three days, telling police that they were terrified of being sold.

MAINS GAS COULD SUPPLY 185,000 HOMES

MAINS gas could soon come to La Safor and parts of La Ribera.

An underground gas pipe that connects the Vall d'Albaida and La Safor is being extended to provide fuel to residents in the Valldigna.

The company behind the move, Gas Natural Cegás, has invested eight million euros in the works and claims that in the first quarter of 2009, some 35 towns and villages will have an on-tap supply.

These include Gandia and Oliva, and most of the towns in between the two together with Villalonga and Ador, and many of those in the Vall de Vernisa and the Valldigna.

Aielo and Castelló de Rugat will also benefit from the works.

Already, Gas Natural Cegás has 800 customers in Gandia.

Sources from the company predict that up to 185,000 users will benefit from the system within six months.

FUEL PRICES FALL

Diesel and unleaded petrol prices are likely to fall dramatically in the next few weeks possibly down to 1 euro per litre.

The price of fuel has already fallen 6.2% in the last month and Spanish Confederation of Business Service Stations (CEEES) sources believe that if the price per barrel of crude oil continues to fall it will have a knock effect at the pumps.

Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio has revealed that there are locations throughout Spain where service stations are already selling fuel below 1 euro per litre.

REDUNDANCIES AT LLADRO

World famous Valencia Porcelain makers, Lladro have announced 275 redundancies, 19% of the workforce, following a drop in U.S sales. The most famous Valencian brand has suffered the rigors of globalization and the impact of competitors who produce low-cost porcelain figures. The U.S market is in the grip of a financial crisis and this has affected sales of the figurines, famous for their pale, washed out appearance. New consumer demands means a change in direction for management and shareholders at Lladro. The drop in sales in the U.S, where Lladro sell more than a third of their figurines has left the company with nearly 40 billion euros of unsold stock.

JUSTICE FOR THE FALLEN

A team of experts have been put together to locate 114,266 missing remains dating back to Franco's regime. Judge, Baltasar Garzon of the Audiencia Nacional, has been given jurisdiction to prosecute the Franco regime for crimes against humanity. But rather than seek out those responsible and bring them to justice Garzon has ordered the exhumation of remains in mass graves in Toledo, Burgos, Leon, Huelva, Navarra, Madrid and Granada, where it is believed the remains of poet Federico García Lorca could be. Security forces will be responsible for verifying that the mass graves, which contain the remains of those killed during the Civil War or in subsequent years, have approval for exhumation from probable relatives and that land owners, public or private, are not opposed to the action. Each excavation will be carried out "under the supervision and direction of the judicial authority of the relevant town or city". Every crime should be investigated because "like the victors of the Civil War who located, identified and buried their fallen the same has not happened for the defeated, many of whom were tortured" said Garzon. The investigation focuses on events the day before the Franco revolution, July 17, 1936; which was followed by war until February 1937. The years up until 1952 will also come under scrutiny as many court Martials were carried out during this time. Two teams will carry out the investigation; the first will analyze and determine the number, location, and identification of those missing between July 1936 and December 1951. The second group will be given access to public or private archives that may contain information about missing persons. This police unit will be responsible for discovering the circumstances surrounding the individual's disappearance, death and determine, if possible, those involved in the murder.

BRITS ARRESTED IN DRUG SWOOP

Four Brits and one Romanian have been arrested in Benijófar and El Garruchal (Murcia) for attempting to smuggle half a ton of cannabis to the UK. According to the National Police (CNP), operation "Rostel" was set up after officers discovered an organized group based in the south eastern Spain who were planning to smuggle the drug into a port in the Valencia Comunidad and then on to the UK. Officers raided a property in Benijófar and seized 500 kilos of cannabis, two cars and a high performance motorbike.

POLICE OFFICERS ARRESTED FOR DEALING DRUGS

The Guardia Civil, Internal Affairs Unit have arrested 15 people, including 3 police officers, for shipping 60 kilograms of cocaine. The undercover operation, which lasted 11 months, resulted in the arrest of 15 people including 2 Guardia Civil officers and a local police officer. Boats were searched as they arrived into Valencia Port. Officers seized guns, cash and 10 luxury cars from properties of the arrested individuals.

NEW GUARDIA CIVIL AGENTS WELCOMED

The Director of the General Police and Guardia Civil, Francisco Javier Valazquez has welcomed 186 new students to the force. Students swore their oath to the flag and Valazquez expressed his gratitude to their families. The 143 men and 43 women have been attending the Guardia Civil academy, Duque de Ahumada in Madrid since August and are due to graduate in January when they will serve in stations across the country.

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MAN ATTACKS WIFE WITH HAMMER

A 76 year old man attacked his wife with a hammer as she lay in bed. A home carer discovered the elderly man attempting to clean blood from the scene. According to the carer when she arrived at the property at 9am on October 18th she saw the husband "cleaning the body and changing his blood stained clothes." Police and family members were alerted and the man arrested. The man, identified only as MLT, was arrested and his wife taken to hospital.

THREE DEATHS IN 15 HOURS

Three people were killed in motorbike accidents in just 15 hours on roads in the Comunidad. A 27 year old man was killed when his motorbike collided head on with a car on the N-332 close to Benidorm. A motorbike rider and cyclist died on the CV-60 between Palma de Gandia and Potries when the two collided, killing the 70 year old cyclist instantly. The motorcyclist was resuscitated at the scene, but later died from his injuries.

TERMINATIONS AT SEA

Abortions have been carried out on board a boat outside Valencia Port. Gynecologist Jose Luis Carbonell carried out three abortions aboard the "Menina" which was anchored in international waters. Three women, all of whom were less than 7 weeks pregnant, had terminations without a psychiatric report, required by Spanish Law. The abortion boat's visit to Valencia is part of the "Women on Waves" campaign which defends a woman's right to an abortion and calls for changes to the 1985 Spanish Abortion Law, which is considered obsolete at a European level. The boat later returned to the dock to be met by anti abortion protesters. Carbonell will carry out a further 7 to 8 terminations over the next four weeks.

10,000 EUROS STOLEN FROM CAR

A man who had just withdrawn 10,000 euros from a bank in Cullera had it stolen when he stopped to change a flat tyre. The victim said "after leaving the bank I sat on the terrace outside and realized that it was easy to watch customers withdrawing money." The victim believes the thieves saw him place the money in his bag before he left the bank in Cullera, punctured his tyres and then followed him until he stopped to change the tyre to snatch the bag from the front seat.

137 MOVEMENTS IN NINE MONTHS

Between January and September 2008, a total of 137 earthquakes have been recorded in the Valencian Comunidad. Of the 137 recorded, 29 reached between 3 and 4 on the Richter scale and were felt by residents. There are 289 locations in the Comunitat that are at seismic risk, the majority in the Alicante province.

NO RECEIPT REQUIRED

Drivers are no longer required to carry a valid receipt for payment of car insurance. In 2007 nearly 160,000 drivers were fined 60 euros for not producing proof of payment when requested by a police officer. Since October 13th the Regulation of Insurance and implementation of insured vehicles (FIVA) database means officers can now radio for confirmation of valid insurance. Although drivers are no longer legally required to carry the receipt, the General Directorate of Traffic (DGT) recommends drivers continue to attach it to the rest of documents in the vehicle.

ON THE JOB

A transvestite has made an official complaint against a train driver after he performed oral sex on the man in the cab of his metro train, but was not paid. On August 29th the transvestite performed oral sex as the metro train travelled between stations in Madrid. On arriving at Moncola platform a fight broke out between the pair after the driver refused to pay for services. According to newspaper, El Mundo, the 45 year old driver, should have been dismissed from his job, but was ordered to work a month without pay by his employer. It is forbidden for train drivers to allow any unauthorized personnel into the cab. Train operator Metro Canillejas in Madrid told El Mundo that passengers were never in any danger as "the

trains have security systems and automatic driving.”

GUN LEFT IN TOILETS

Alicante City Council has suspended a police officer after he left his gun in a public toilet at the city courts. The Department of Human Resources described the incident as "serious" because, "as yet the gun has still not been found and citizens may still be in danger." The officer had been attending court as a witness when he left his gun and sunglasses on the cistern. It was not until leaving the courts sometime later he realized the gun was missing. The officer states there was no negligence on his part, "because the lapse was momentary, and as soon as he realized he returned to the toilets." In London, last month, a member of Tony Blair’s security team left his loaded gun in the toilet of a cafeteria. The officer was fired.