



Dear Members,



Hope everyone is enjoying an early happy 2024 Semana Santa with family and friends....looking back, March was a busy month with lots of activities for everyone. Enjoy photos of our St. Patrick's Day party and a few other club activities at the end of the newsletter.

Going forward, we continue to bring in new members and as we do so, we will try to create activities and events that are interesting, varied and available to all of our members.

We have another book exchange table planned for our
WEDNESDAY, 3rd of APRIL GPL



Remember, bring up to 3 📖 of any genre. Leave them on the book exchange table in the club restaurant for the interest of others. Once everyone has put their books on the table....you can see what interests you! Take up to 3 books home, return them next month or keep them! Bring 3 new books to the next GPL....

Don't forget to read the interesting articles by Christine and Lorenzo. Christine reminds us of the history and fun of St. Jordi Day and Lorenzo shares another unforgettable anecdote from long ago.....

There are plenty of activities to choose from in April and May.... Culinary Adventures is offering a Japanese style lunch at Far Nomo restaurant in the lighthouse in beautiful Llafranc on April 24th... AND don't forget to mark your calendars for the ANNUAL CAR RALLY MAY 15th!

The cultural excursion to the Greek and Roman Ruins in May is an interesting walk through the history of the region and hopefully lunch to follow in a charming French bistro, La Gruta. Invitations are usually emailed about two weeks prior to each activity.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

April 3 - Wednesday, GPL

April 11 & 25 - Pétanque

April 18 - Pitch'nputt

HAPPY ST. JORDI DAY 🌹📖

April 24 - Culinary Adventures- Lunch @ Far Nomo, Llafranc

April 29 - Book Group

May 2, 16 & 30 - Pitch'nputt

May 6 - GPL

May 9 & 23 - Pétanque

MAY 15 ANNUAL CAR RALLY

May 22 - Cultural Excursion - Empuries Ruins, L'Escola

SANT JORDI DAY

Have you ever had the impression that half of Catalan men are called JORDI? Probably because the patron saint of Catalonia is Sant Jordi. He is celebrated every April 23rd, and this is one of the most popular festivals in the region, which combines the lovers' festival (Valentine's Day is much less popular) and the book festival. The story of Sant Jordi was born from a legend including these 4 elements: an evil dragon, a pretty princess, a valiant knight and a red rose.



It is said that in a small village near Tarragona, a horrible dragon settled in a cave terrorized the inhabitants. They decided to draw short straw the person who would go and confront the terrible dragon in the hope of killing it and thus freeing the village. Unfortunately, the merciless dragon devoured the inhabitants one after the other. When the Princess's turn came, she bravely (or maybe not) headed towards the cave and, just as the fierce dragon was about to devour her, a handsome young knight on horseback just happened to be passing by... You have of course guessed that it was the brave Sant Jordi who, with no hesitation, pierced the vicious dragon with his sword. At the place where the blood of the dragon flowed, a red rose bush appeared from which Sant Jordi offered a magnificent rose to the Princess.



But there's no book in this legend... Well, in the 1920s Barcelona was a major center for book publishing, so in 1929 a well-inspired man* proposed that Sant Jordi's Day would also be the Catalan Book Day as both Cervantes and Shakespeare died on April 23rd, 1616. *Well-inspired because on that single day, EUR 20 million are spent on books in Catalonia.

This is the reason why, in Catalonia every April 23rd, men (who identify with brave Sant Jordi) offer a rose to their beloved and women offer a book to their gentleman. Of course, today the custom has adapted to society and women also have the right to cultivate themselves and can therefore receive a rose AND a book. And modern couples are no longer just a beautiful princess and a valiant knight.

So, get ready for April 23rd, and don't miss the celebrations all over Catalonia. Most towns turn into open-air bookstores and red roses decorate the streets, balconies, store windows... Some restaurants even propose candlelight dinners.



 C. Denis

THE WHITE SHIRT

I had been very busy for months opening a new hotel on the island of Ischia in the Gulf of Naples. After one of my frequent trips to Rome, on my return journey I ended up in hospital in Santa Maria Capua Vetere, a Mafia controlled city about 45 kilometers from Naples.

My mistake was to have lunch in Rome before driving back to Naples. The wine I had with lunch made me sleepy and my journey abruptly ended as my car crashed against a wall. The police found me unconscious and bleeding from my head.

When I woke up at the hospital, the doctors told me I had to stay in bed at least seven days because I had concussion. After seven days, I started moving around the hospital making friends. One day one of them told me, "today is Sunday and a beautiful day, why don't you take a walk in the nearby square?"

The square was full of people and after a while I noticed it was only men gathered in groups. I suddenly realized they were all looking at me. I was wearing my blood stained shirt of the accident.

When I returned to the hospital, my friend asked why I had come back so quickly. I told him it was because of the impact my blood stained shirt had made on the locals. With a curious smile, he told me I could buy a new shirt at the hospital bar. Although doubtful, I went immediately to the hospital bar and asked the bartender if it was true he sold shirts. His eyes went wide and after hesitating, replied, "yes, I do."

During my transaction with the bartender I noticed that the customers at the bar kept looking at me. I quickly left the bar for my room to change into my fresh shirt. Sporting my new shirt, I went to the hospital living room to show it to my new friends. They were all there and when I appeared they all started laughing. They took a long time to stop. I asked my friend, the one who told me where to buy a shirt, what was so funny.



"Lorenzo, you have to know that it is a custom here that when a man dies, his family washes his body and dresses him in the clean, fresh white shirt they buy at the bar. No one from around here would wear a shirt from the bar while they are still alive! You are wearing a shirt for a dead man. This is why everybody is laughing at you!"

What could I do? I was in a situation where I felt I had no choice and decided to keep wearing the shirt anyway, at my own peril.

-Compañía 1969

L.Tommasi - Les Teules, February 2024

Another gem from Lorenzo Tommasi.....long ago in Italy



St. Paddy's Day
New member, Tiny Start won the putting contest and Paul Ashworth the raffle 🍀



Pétanque season began March 14 - Dominique shows off her skills



Celebrating Sophal's hole in one at Pitch'nputt



March GPL Calcotada lunch - a bit messy but so fun 😂



WHAT'S NEW

Hita Doumet

Remember to click on the underlined link to read the full article 🤔🤔

I wish to present these very interesting events!

AROUND BARCELONA- Cirque de Soleil's show returns March 21 to May 19.

Click on the link for an article from Catalan News:

[Cirque Du Soleil's iconic show Alegria returns to Barcelona](#)

Buy tickets:

[Tickets for Alegria in Barcelona, Spain at Under the Big Top, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat | Cirque du Soleil](#)

GIRONA- Visit the flower festival May 11-19 and enjoy concerts around the city:

[Girona A Cappella | Per Temps de Flors Girona alça la veu!](#)

Some news of interest.....

How to exchange your drivers license in Spain

This article is for holders of UK AND EU and Non-EU drivers licenses that wish to exchange them for a Spanish one, updated January 2024.

<https://www.healthplanspain.com/blog/expat-tips/88-spanish-driving-licences.html>

Health services - How does the Catalan healthcare system work?

Anyone in Catalonia has both the public and private healthcare systems at their disposal, but before heading off to the doctor or clinic, it's a good idea to know in advance how to access these health services and who is eligible for treatment in them.

Read more [How does the Catalan healthcare system work?](#)

Drought

The Guardian newspaper, 15/2/24.

Written by María Ramírez journalist and deputy managing editor of [elDiario.es](#)

[What will Spain look like when it runs out of water? Barcelona is giving us a glimpse | María Ramírez | The Guardian](#)

Traveling

Discover Catalunya onboard tourist trains

Hop on board Montserrat Rack Railway and Funiculars, Núria Rack Railway, the Tren del Ciment, the Tren dels Llacs and the Gelida Funicular and discover Catalonia.

[Tourists | FGC tourist trains](#)
