

Rory and Via at the top of the Rock of Gibraltar

## *Livin' La Vida Via*

by Via Alfonso

*Hola, como estas?* Greetings from abroad in Sevilla, Spain. As most of you I'm sure know (because all Laicos are *chismosa* (gossipy)), I am studying in Sevilla for a year. I have been here for about 3 months now, since September. I am slowly learning more Spanish and trying to adapt to the Spanish customs and culture. This is undoubtedly not too difficult because one of the most popular customs here in Spain, especially in Andalucia, is SIESTA time. *Me encanta siesta.*

During siesta, all the shops and offices close at around 1:30, basically, in order for people to go home to eat and sleep. So everyday after *almuerzo* (lunch), I take a little nap. At first I had to get used to this custom, but I quickly got accustomed to my little siesta after lunch. Now I hardly go without a nap every day.

Other than napping, I have also grown very fond of the Spanish nightlife. It is absolutely fabulous!!! Let's just say that the *discotecas* don't open until 2am, and close around 6am (No mom, of course I don't stay out that late). Siestas also help in dealing with these late nights.

So far I have had the opportunity to travel to Morocco, Lagos in Portugal, London, and Vienna. While everyone will be at Tita Malu's or Tito Chicho's house for Christmas, I will be backpacking (yes, Via backpacking) through Spain, Paris, Berlin, and Italy. I have already been advised by my wise, well-traveled mother to bring a roll of toilet paper for the bathrooms.

Life here in Spain isn't only about siesta, discos, and traveling. It is also about EATING. I live with a family here and my *senora* is the best cook. My favorite dish is her *pucharillo*. Coming back to the U.S will be quite a challenge because while I'm here, my *senora* cooks for me, washes my clothes, and cleans my room. So, basically my life here is not too horrible. I get to travel, sleep, dance at the discos, and eat *pucharillo*. What a perfect life for a Laico, huh? Well, I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Hasta luego,  
Via



## *I GOT STONED IN MY 40s*

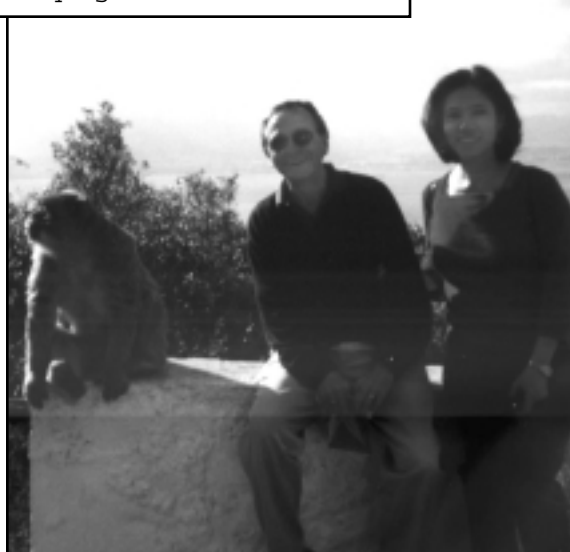
by Rory Packwood

I never got stoned as a teenager and I never imagined I would get stoned in my 40s. That's what I get for going to Morocco and not reading up on the culture before going there. Bill and I visited Olivia in Sevilla, Spain and we didn't realize it was going to be quite an exciting trip.

On the first day of the trip in Seville, we witnessed a lady running after a motorcycle and screaming her head off in Spanish. Via translated what she was screaming and we found out that her purse had been snatched and the thief had run away on a motorcycle. She said this was quite common. We related the incident to our travelling companions, Bill's best friend John, and his wife. A few days later, John got his pouch snatched by a motorcycle thief while they were sitting in an outdoor cafe. It contained his passport. The next day, as we were checking out of our hotel in Seville, Bill was surprised that a man came from nowhere and offered to bring our baggage to the car. He thought it was part of the hotel service. The next day, he noticed that the small bag containing our video camera was missing. It also contained our airline tickets. He suspects that it had been stolen by that man that appeared from nowhere. Fortunately, the airline replaced our tickets without any hassle. But subsequently, Bill moaned at every picturesque place we went to about missing his video camera.

Bill, Via and I drove to Gibraltar, a British colony, where we renewed ties with the apes that have inhabited the top of the Rock for centuries. Then there was Morocco. We took a hydro-foil ride to Tetouan, which they say is the "Tijuana of Morocco." It was very, very depressed, Moslem and scary. The men wore cloaks with pointed hoods, like monks. All of them have moustaches. The women all had bandanas and some of them had their mouths covered with scarves. There was a lot of garbage around. The cleanest and nicest places were the

Monkeying around Gibraltar.



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