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LA CONCHA

Newsletter of American Pilgrims on the Camino
September 2017

Guardian Angel

by Brad Harper, Toano VA

October 2010. I am standing atop Monte de Gozo, or “Mount of Joy,” and I halt where millions have paused before me. The city of Santiago de Compostela lies ahead, and I shiver slightly as the sweat on my back is chilled by the cool Galician breeze. The skies are overcast but the rain has stopped, and I can see the Cathedral roof, still some five miles away, peeking out from the surrounding buildings. I hear the sound of its bells ringing across the valley; they are guiding me as a lighthouse does ships at sea. I sense Michael’s excitement, but he says nothing. He doesn’t have to.

I met Michael in Vicenza, Italy, where I was in command, and he was one of my medics. Born with Klinefelter’s Syndrome, 47 XXY, the extra X chromosome put his body at war with itself as it tried to deposit fat around his bottom and breasts. His condition forced him to work far harder than most to meet the height and weight requirements for a male soldier. He was awkward in his ostrich-like body and starved for acceptance. Interestingly, he had once been a freelance photographer for the Associated Press, so I made him our unit photographer. The recognition made him happy and gave him a role at social functions where he was otherwise at a loss.

I was called one night to an Italian hospital after he turned himself in for contemplating suicide, and he apologized tearfully. That was when I told him I knew of his condition, and that it didn’t lessen my opinion of him. “We are as God made us,” I said, and we embraced.

There were no more admissions after that point, and as my time there came to a close, he volunteered for Afghanistan. The assignment was to a training unit embedded in the Afghani army, and I feared how Michael would be accepted. However, my efforts to block his transfer were overruled. We kept in touch. Michael made sergeant and received the Bronze Star. Apparently, the soldiers there understood that Michael was a damn good medic and would do anything to save them. I think it was the first time in his life he was fully accepted as himself.

Michael returned to Vicenza, but he was not welcomed back warmly. Instead, he was seen as a “problem” soldier struggling to meet the expectations of a new command. One dark night in the Italian mountains, he jumped off a bridge and fell sixty-five feet, but he survived. When I visited him at Walter Reed, every extremity was suspended and pinned. I did my best to reassure him I was there to encourage, not berate, and we

talked a long time. At one point, I mentioned my dream of walking the Camino once I retired from the Army. I felt the need to figure out who I was after a lifetime in uniform, and since the ninth century, this ancient pathway to the bones of the Apostle James has been one means to find such answers.

Michael looked up at me and in a quiet voice asked, “When you go, may I go with you?” I hesitated. I envisioned this journey as a private affair, a walk of contemplation on where I had been and had yet to go. Then, I saw his eyes. I said, “Yes!” and meant it.

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Message From the Chair

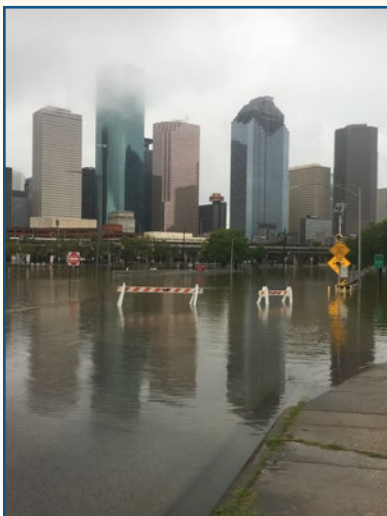
Dear Members,

On my very first pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, I vividly remember sitting in the Pilgrims' Mass and hearing the priest's homily that "your pilgrimage starts when you get home." With the excitement of a 200-kilometer walk and arrival at the holy city, I remember feeling a bit deflated and, quite honestly, a bit annoyed at this message. As I was experiencing my Camino high, I was being told that my work was just beginning. Not exactly what I wanted to hear at that moment.

The past few weeks have been tough ones for my hometown of Houston, Texas. We've had catastrophic flooding, and just as the rains stopped we saw the majority of Florida prepare to be hit by the winds and rain from Hurricane Irma.

So, what's the connection between pilgrimage and disasters?

For so many people, the journey of disaster



recovery is just beginning. Although my family was safe, I personally know 15 families that had between four inches and four feet of water in their homes. Could the journey of recovery be analogous to our journey as pilgrims? What happens when the media attention and

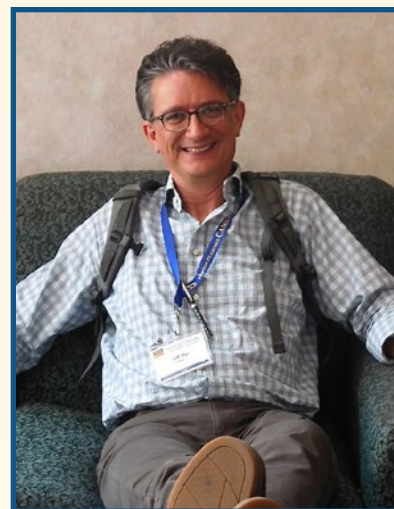
the spontaneous volunteers go away? The real work begins.

We all know the feeling of community as we finish our pilgrimage, but maybe the challenge we all face is how we take what we learned, sustain it, and share it with others. How can we share our commitment to simplicity, service, community and gratitude with our friends, families and co-workers? We all know that pilgrimage is not a one-time event but how we, as pilgrims, live our Camino values.

For those whose homes were damaged or destroyed, what support can we be? Is there a backpack we can offer to carry or words of encouragement we can lend? We know it's not the arrival to Santiago, it's the journey itself and that the real journey "begins once we get home." ♦

Buen Camino!

Jeff Stys
Board Chair



Jeff Stys, photo by Joan DeFeis



What Values Define American Pilgrims?

Our mission statement is clear: *to foster the enduring traditions of the Camino by supporting its infrastructure, by gathering pilgrims together, and by providing information and encouragement to past and future pilgrims.*

But of all the values we learn on the Camino, which mean the most to us for the long term, which define us, on which should we base our decisions? The Board discussed it. The Chapter coordinators came up with their list. Participants

at the 2017 Gathering wrote their favorites on a big board and then honed the list down to a core cluster. Board chair Jeff Stys sent a survey to all the members to get their take.

They are no surprise: **Community, Service, Gratitude, and Simplicity.** These are the values that as an organization we want to hold ourselves accountable to in all our decisions and all our actions. ♦

Continued from page 1

We kept in touch. His rehab went well; he was discharged, found a girl and got engaged. Then, one day, I got an email from Michael's fiancée, telling me Michael had taken his life. She wrote that he spoke often of our promised walk together, and she asked me to say a prayer for Michael when I finally walked *The Way*.

Veterans Affairs data from 2012 show that on average twenty-two veterans take their lives every day. That is a statistic. Michael was far more. He was "my" soldier, made in God's image, as God had always intended him to be.

The bells are loud as we approach the entry. They seem to be celebrating our journey completed, our promises kept. We enter together, and as we do, I whisper, "We made it, Michael. Time to rest."

When I am asked if I walked the Camino with anyone, I truthfully answer that I was by myself but never alone.

Three months before he took his life, Michael sent me a series of photographs he took of a statue of the Archangel Michael outside a cathedral. The angel looms high on its pedestal, a sword in its right hand prepared for battle. The one I found most striking was taken in the dead of night with just the outline showing, and I imagine him keeping vigil somewhere, still ready to serve, and protect. ♦

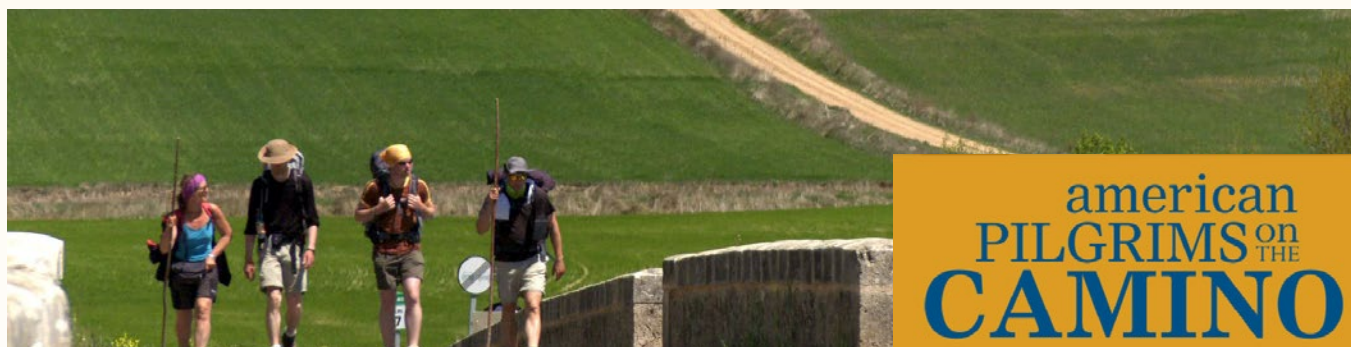
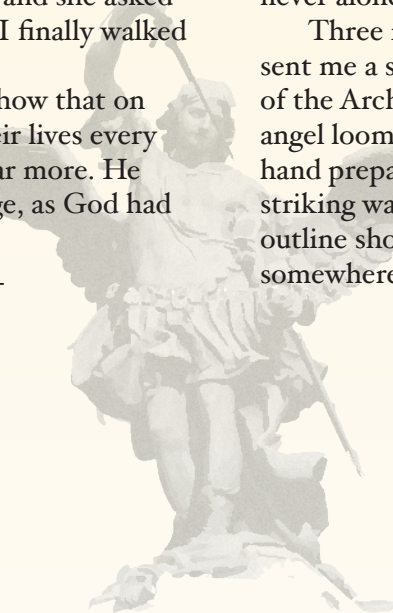


photo by Lydia B. Smith.

American Pilgrims Facebook Group

In keeping with American Pilgrims mission, the objective of the Facebook group is to provide information and encouragement to past and future pilgrims. As of mid-September, there were 16,300 members in our Facebook group. The number keeps growing, with about 500 people joining in the past

couple of months. More than 77% of the members actively participate. In fact, there were 1,600 posts and 25,000 comments in the recent two-month period. It looks like our Facebook objective is being achieved. ♦



[View 28 more comments](#)



Another Day on the Camino: Small Wonders, Big Impact

by Linda Thornton, Austin TX

My husband and I are heading to Palas de Rei. The path is nothing but mud, and it's drizzling. I'm sweating in my rain jacket, trudging along and feeling grouchy. A fellow pilgrim, a lovely woman traveling alone in her 70s, with a sparkle in her eyes, catches up to me and says, "What a beautiful morning! I love the mist. It changes the entire perspective of the landscape." As I'm listening to her, I unzip my jacket, pull down my hood and the light drizzle instantly cools me off. By the time she goes on her way, I'm feeling great and notice that the rain has already stopped.

Walking right through farms and past lovely old stone farm houses, we catch a glimpse of daily life: an old woman humming to herself as she hangs laundry; a farmer out in the pasture tending his sheep; a woman picking raspberries who stops to offer us some; the cows lazily grazing in the fields; the dogs sleeping in the sun. I find I have acquired a new skill and though it may not be resumé material, it's interesting to note: I am now able to differentiate an animal's manure by its smell.

We're up and down again today. I laugh to myself as I coin a new phrase: "In Spain, what goes up, must come UP!" Walking in the forest always seems rather mystical, especially the way the light plays on and around the trees, lined up in exact rows. The scent of the eucalyptus trees is even stronger when we crush some leaves in our hands.

The outside tables are still wet in the little taverna when we stop for a cold drink. A fellow pilgrim is wiping off his table with a rag he borrowed from the owner, and when he sees us, he smiles and wipes off ours too. I decide to pass on the kindness by wiping the table for some other pilgrims that sit at the next table.

As each day ends, I find myself overcome with emotion, reliving all the details that make each day like no other. A simple gesture, a chance encounter, a small town on such a large world stage; there's such beauty in the incongruity of it all! ♦

Preparing for Gathering 2018 – Making Meaning from Memories

Do you have a powerful story about how you made meaning out of your Camino? Maybe it is a volunteer experience? Or a lifestyle change? Or perhaps renewed relationships? The 2018 Gathering Committee is looking for several pilgrims to serve on an interactive panel at the event.

Likewise, we are in need of creative souls to lead making-meaning breakout sessions. Do you have a skill like origami creating, jewelry making, song writing, haiku writing, or dancing you could teach

others in such a session? If so, we would love to hear about it.

Also, volunteer photographers and videographers, and technology troubleshooters would be a big help.

Contact us at gatherings@americanpilgrims.org if you might be able to help with any of this. ♦

making Meaning from Memories

**Thursday April 12 - Sunday April 15, 2018
Vallombrosa Center • Menlo Park CA**

Mark the date and place it on your schedule.

Note: *The Gathering location has changed from earlier announcements.*

Eating on the Camino del Norte

by Danny Bernstein, Asheville NC

Food is very important for hikers, pilgrims and others. On the Camino del Norte this spring, I aimed for a balanced meal, even in restaurants.

Ensalada mixta, mixed salad, was my starting point. Instead of a tossed salad, the components are arranged on a large plate: lettuce, tomatoes, onions, sometimes shaved carrots and beets, half a boiled egg and canned tuna fish. With olive oil and white vinegar, it made a fine meal. Once I discovered that ensalada mixta was a constant in cafes, I ate one every day.



The dishes in cafes, especially on the Camino del Norte, focus on meat and cheese since the trail passes through cattle, sheep and goat farms. The meat is processed into chorizo (Spanish sausage), bacon, and bologna. Cured meats and cheeses keep for a long time, which is imperative when restaurants

have a small local clientele and few pilgrims.

The best way to enjoy cured meats is in Asturian bean soup. It consists of fava beans, potatoes, kale, chorizo and blood



pudding. I didn't think about the fat content and concentrated on the healthy beans. But it is really Asturian; once I crossed the bridge into Galicia, the soup disappeared from the menu.

It wasn't easy to cook in the small hostels of the del Norte. Stores and equipped kitchens are often unavailable. However, in Lourenza, Galicia, I saw several supermarkets. After checking the hostel

kitchen, the cooks went to buy dinner supplies and invited everyone around. The others took care of the wine and did the dishes – a fair exchange.

In small villages, getting fresh fruit and vegetables is a challenge. I bought what looked eatable – apples, bananas that hadn't gotten too soft, kiwifruit that wasn't rock hard, tomatoes that were red but not mushy.

And then there were Spanish tortillas, omelet. It's ubiquitous for lunch because it stays fresh for a couple of days. When you order a triangular wedge, they heat it for you.

Spanish tortilla, unrelated to the familiar Mexican tortilla, is potato slices covered in egg batter, cooked in a cast-iron pan. Some are mostly potatoes with enough batter to hold it together or lots of eggs and little potatoes and even sweet peppers.

I watched a restaurant cook make a tortilla, cover the pan with a large plate, and flip it at just the right moment. If it's too soft, you'd get a gooey mess on the stove – a good reason not to make it at home.



In Galicia, every cafe offered Santiago cake which dates from the Middle Ages. It's almond flour, sugar, eggs and orange zest. It can be baked as individual tarts or cut in wedges from a round cake.

That's a cake I could eat every day – and I did. ♦

The Great Westward Walk: From the Front Door to the End of the Earth

by Antxon González Gabarain (translated by Rebekah Scott)

reviewed by Stacey Wittig, Flagstaff AZ

I was propped up in bed next to my husband. Me with book in hand, he with computer games blinking on his tablet. I took a sharp breath in, a reaction to the sentence that I was reading.

"What? What?" he asked. I shared the words that, to me, described the Camino pilgrimage experience so well.

I had just cracked open the recently-released

"His words, almost poetic at times, roll back the curtain on slices of Spanish life..."

English version of *The Great Westward Walk* by Antxon Gonzalez Gabarain. I was only in the introduction and already mesmerized. My husband listened while I read the sentence that had caused me to gasp in recognition:

"The Walk to the End of the World is a true story. It celebrates the fundamentally irrational nature of pilgrimage, as it plays out against the banal rationality of our times."

Yes, the dichotomy of pilgrimage in these times when rationalism is often valued over spirituality struck a chord with me. I finished reading out loud the introduction, written by Izaskun

Gabarain, and then resumed my silent reading. Another gasp. Another "What? What?" and I began reading to my husband the Prologue written

by another of the author's friends. This time without hubby's permission.

"The author told me he was dying.

He was finishing the book using a special computerized device that allowed him to type by tracing the movement and blinking of his eyes. A terrible, consuming disease had taken away use of his hands, arms and legs...Antxon was running out of time.

Finishing this book was his final desire, he said, his last wish."

The Great Westward Walk: From the Front Door to the End of the Earth

by *Antxon González Gabarain & Rebekah Scott (translator)*

Antonio Maria González Saragüeta (June 11, 2017)

322 pages



The writer completed the manuscript, a captivating memoir of his Camino journey from the doorstep of his home in Zumaia, in the Basque Country, to Santiago, three days before ALS took his life at age 41. Yet Gabarain lives on in this book that gives me insight into his Basque ponderings and connections with his countrymen that I, as a foreigner, could never have. His words, almost poetic at times, roll back the curtain on slices of Spanish life that I would not otherwise have known. His insight and description are probably reasons that the Spanish version is a best-seller in Spain.

Three cheers to Rebekah Scott, American Pilgrims on the Camino member and speaker at the 2017 Gathering in Atlanta, for her fine work of translating this amazing Camino narrative. ♦

Humanity

by Janet Meskin, Los Angeles CA

"Each blade of grass has its Angel
that bends over it and whispers,
'grow, grow' "

-The Talmud

Part IV: And to know the place for the first time

Arrival of spirit assimilates with humanity
Nowhere is everywhere and suddenly you're somewhere, either
Down or depleted or dead or shine like a
Knight wielding the sword of discretion
Navigating the belief that things happen for a reason and
Obstacles are opportunities with vistas for eyes to see miles into the
Windows of human souls weaved
Tapestries of life experiences where willing
Hands will lend a hand and maybe
Even more with an understanding heart, here
Pilgrims burn like the phoenix on fire
Leaning into the burning discomfort that out of
Ashes we rise renewed
Coupled with once "I" was lost
Eclipsing into now "I" am found
Freedom - the end is the beginning.
Open to
Receive each moment, a
Treasure...unpredictable
Holy place within where serendipitous
Encounters are meant to be
Friendships appear temporary yet on the
Inside are not; we're all the same
Red colored thread woven with nature.
So much stimulating the senses
Tranquility one moment watching a
Trillion white fluffs floating - that's
Immediacy of the moment
"Mirari" Latin for "Miracles" - to look in wonder
Enchanted... "And know the place for the first time." ♦

Editor's Note: This is the final part of a four part essay/poem written in acrostic form. The previous three parts appeared in the July, September, and December 2016 issues.

Caminos Less Traveled - The Camino Aragonés

by Lynn Talbot, Blacksburg VA

I have often wondered what the other Pyrenees crossing – the Camino Aragonés – was like. This past May, I found out, when my friend Annie Argall



View of Arrés

and I decided to tackle the route. We started at the Somport Pass, after taking the bus from Jaca. Here we were surrounded by high, snow covered peaks, while the valley below was lush and green and filled with lovely wildflowers. The trail, which followed the Río Aragón, was well marked. We spent our first night in Canfranc Estación, where we toured the elegant train station, now undergoing renovation (reservations required).

A long second day took us to Jaca, a historically important city with a cathedral and a citadel. The next day we stayed in Santa Cilia, so that we could visit Santa Cruz de la Serós with its Romanesque church and San Juan de la Peña's 10th century monastery built into the rock. Although we took a taxi, one can walk up over a very rough trail or along the road. Both places were extraordinary.

From Santa Cilia, we walked through a series of hill towns: Arrés, Artieda, Ruesta, and Undués de Lerda, hiking through spectacularly beautiful countryside. However, this stretch is not well marked, which caused some confusion. In addition, there is very little infrastructure between these towns – essentially no other towns, no bars, no water fountains, no ATMs, so you must come prepared. We also encountered unusually hot weather, which led us to

make some etapas shorter than planned.

Sangüesa, our next stop, is a city with all services available and two memorable churches, Santa María la Real and la Iglesia de Santiago. Here we learned that the albergue in Izco was closed, so we chose to detour to Foz de Lumbier, a nature reserve on the Irati river. Although we had to walk 5 km along the highway, we then followed an abandoned railway line through two tunnels to reach a spectacular gorge where many people were birdwatching. From there, we taxied ahead to Monreal and, the next day, walked to Tiebas and its ruined castle. Our last day took us past Eunat and into Puente la Reina.

Is this a route worth walking? Absolutely!

Although very different from the Francés, it's easily doable - with proper planning. Guides indicate where albergues

and food are available and one can find solitude if so desired. And there is no rush for beds in the albergues! ♦



Foz de Lumbier



Somport Pass



View from Camino of Ría do Burgo

Camínos Less Traveled - the Camino Inglés from A Coruña

by Annie Argall, Baltimore MD

Lynn Talbot and I had time for another short Camino after we finished the Camino Aragonés, and a talk at the last Gathering had piqued our interest in the Camino Inglés from A Coruña. So, full of enthusiasm, off to A Coruña we went.

A Coruña is a lovely old port city well worth the visit. The Tower of Hercules, a still-functioning lighthouse built by the Romans, and the city's many inviting beaches and dramatic seascapes are impressive. The beautiful Church of Santiago, in the city's historic quarter, is the traditional starting point for this Camino, and we went there to have our credentials stamped.

So, we start at the Church of Santiago. Then what? The route through the city is not well marked and sometimes not marked at all. Had a kind lady at the Galician tourist office not marked the route for us on a street map, it might have taken us twice as long to exit the city. Once off the map she had marked, we took more than one wrong turn and had to backtrack.

It wasn't until we were about 15 km outside A Coruña that Camino markers began to appear consistently. By day's end, the modern

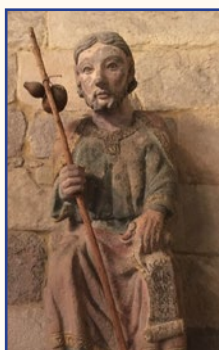
Xunta albergue at Sergude was a welcome sight. We were finally beyond the environs of A Coruña and firmly in the green hills of Galicia.

The next day, a long, steep climb took us to the point where the El Ferrol and A Coruña routes join, and great views made us forget our aching legs. That day, we began to meet other pilgrims. Until then, we had had the Camino all to ourselves.

Most pilgrims walk the Inglés from El Ferrol, because the distance merits a compostela, while the 75 km from A Coruña does not. We understood that new arrangements might make it possible to earn a Compostela for this 75 km route if we walked the additional 25 km in our own country. We reasoned that since we had just completed 171 km in Spain, perhaps this would make up for the 25 km we had not walked and documented at home.

Sadly, the Pilgrims' Office didn't see it our way and turned down our request for compostelas because we had not walked the last 100 km.

Disappointed? Perhaps, but still happy to have traced the footsteps of pilgrims from the British Isles and Scandinavia on one of the Camino's lesser-traveled, historic routes. ♦



*Statue of Santiago
Church of Santiago
A Coruña*



17th century Capilla de San Juan, Aquelabanda

A Camino with My Daughter

by Marla Keese, Newbury Park CA



Danielle with a sweet dog who just wanted to be petted

My dream was to walk a Camino this year to celebrate my 75th birthday. My daughter, Danielle, heard the call and gifted me with a resounding, “YES, Mom! I will go with you!” This was her first Camino and my fourth. We walked the Portuguese Camino from Porto to Santiago on the Central Route this past April into May.

As I look through all our pictures, my heart still sings with the joy of remembering this very special time of mother-daughter bonding. We laughed, we cried, we endured, and in all, we had a glorious time walking together as well as with others we met along the way. The various experiences that were presented to us were life-altering to say the least. This is something we both will treasure all the days of our lives. A number of people said to us, “I wish my

parent/son/daughter would do the Camino with me. You are so blessed to be doing this together.” Indeed, that is the way we saw it. The Camino does provide in mysterious and beautiful ways!!!

Danielle has a very special gift of relating to animals, and she did so on this journey. She was referred to as the “animal whisperer” along the path, and I, too, loved rejoicing in all these experiences with her. ♦

Editor's Note: *Marla is the co-coordinator of the American Pilgrims Southern California Chapter*



Marla and Danielle stop to enjoy an ice cream



Along the Via Lemovicensis (Vézelay) in France

photo by Susan Alcorn, Oakland CA



Were it not for the way you taught me to look at
the world, to see the life at play in everything.
I would have been lonely forever.

-Ted Kooser



Walking for My Mother

by *Marta Merriman, Cumming GA*

I had shared pictures from my Camino many times. Nevertheless, realizing that photos could not capture my motivation for going, I always had the desire to write about it. My daughter Andrea was just born when I first journeyed to Santiago 28 years ago. Feeling fulfilled as a mother of a healthy girl, I had offered a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in prayer to God.

Twenty-five years later, my mother passed away in Mexico City. The overwhelming nature of her loss again made me want to thank God. I was grateful for mom's soul and the gift of life that she gave me. I remembered my promise to God to make a pilgrimage when I became a mother. Now was a time to for another such promise. However, this time it would be to honor the soul of my mom and grant her the traditional Catholic plenary indulgence as a gift from my Camino in her name.

Moving forward with the plan, I flew from Florida to Europe the first week of April. Before leaving, I had the opportunity to consult with an

experienced pilgrim, Jacky, about her Camino and what I could expect. She supported me, made very smart recommendations for my packing, and helped me plan for the final 100 kilometers from Sarria to Santiago. The first two weeks in Europe I trained daily and stayed with friends—sharing love and recovering physical and spiritual strength to start my Camino by myself but with the spirit of my mother in my heart!

Once in Sarria, I realized that I did not have the best shoes, nor the best backpack, nor the best map, but I had the best WAY!! My mother, Maria Martha, would be with me step by step. I met an amazing group of friends, ate delicious food, had nice wine, slept in humble accommodations, endured three days of pure rain, laughed, and cried. My feet were in pain, but my smile kept coming back!

Arriving to Santiago and receiving the plenary indulgence for mom was the biggest moment in my spirit. I felt the vivid companionship of the Divine caressing my mom's soul and spirit. ¡Buen Camino, Maria Martha! My mom received her plenary indulgence on April 25, 2015! ♦



Marta Adriana Merriman (Zapata)

American Pilgrims Helping Camino Infrastructure

Americans walk the Camino in increasing numbers. American Pilgrims members also help improve the Camino with more and larger grants year after year. The 2017 grants have just been awarded. Ten associations and albergues received awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$6,000, totalling just over \$50,000. The grants were quite varied this year, ranging from improving signage on the trail near Zaragoza and on the Camino Mozárabe to enabling completion of refurbishing of a municipal albergue on the Ruta del Ebro. Still other grants improve plumbing at a municipal albergue near Antequera and repair a leaking roof at one on the Via Lusitana. One supports reconstruction of a donated building into an albergue on the Mozárabe and another supports a similar project on the Portugués, near Padrón. The program continues to expand to the lesser known, less travelled routes to Santiago.

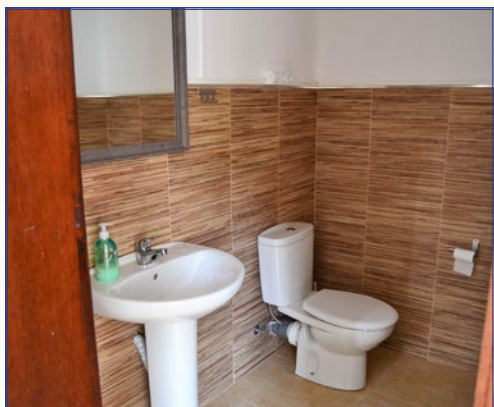
Here are two recipients of our grants funded by your membership dollars:

A municipal 36-bed albergue in Zafra, north of Seville on the Via de la Plata doesn't have a bathroom on the dormitory floor. American Pilgrims' grant will fund construction of two bathrooms on that floor, making it safer and more convenient for pilgrims.

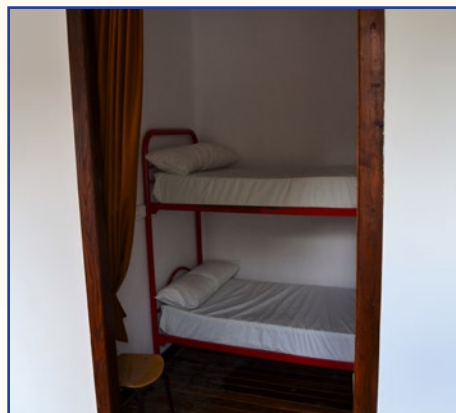
Construction of a 14-bed albergue in an old parish house in a small town on the Camino del Sureste is almost complete, but they are short of money for the final steps. Local businesses and the association raised the money for construction so far and began the project last year. An American Pilgrims' grant will put them at the finish line. ♦



Storage for pilgrims in Burgos



Improved accommodations in Herbón



Fixing a leaking roof

Walking Meditation: How To Do It and Maybe Cure Your Sore Feet

by Deborah Hammond, Tacoma WA

Pilgrim feet are often sore. They can make us miserable. I'd like to suggest a possible solution. How about making part of each day's walk a deliberate walking meditation?

This is how you do it. Find a section of road that is relatively flat and uncrowded. Early morning may be best, but any time and duration, minutes to an hour or more, will do.

Walking meditation is about a deliberate placing of attention. Before you take a step, stop. Is your load securely balanced and comfortable on your back? Are your shoes as comfortable as possible?

Stand solidly on both feet and feel the earth. Feel the whole of your foot: toes, sole, heel, sides, top. Rock back and forth for a moment, feeling your body's weight as it contacts the ground through your legs, ankles, and feet. Let your back lengthen; let your shoulders, neck, and jaw relax. Let your head float. Smile. Take a few slow breaths and feel the air enter and leave your body.

This preparation takes only a few seconds. Now you are ready to walk.

Shift your attention to your feet, and, as you walk, keep it there.

With each step, feel the toes, the mid-foot, the

arch, the heel, the ankle. Feel your weight shift from heel to toe from one foot to the other. Pay attention to the lifted leg, its swing through the air. Feel your foot land, feel it take your weight, freeing your other foot to lift and swing. Each step is a complex symphony of sensation and movement. Gaze is open, awake, aware of surroundings in a general way.

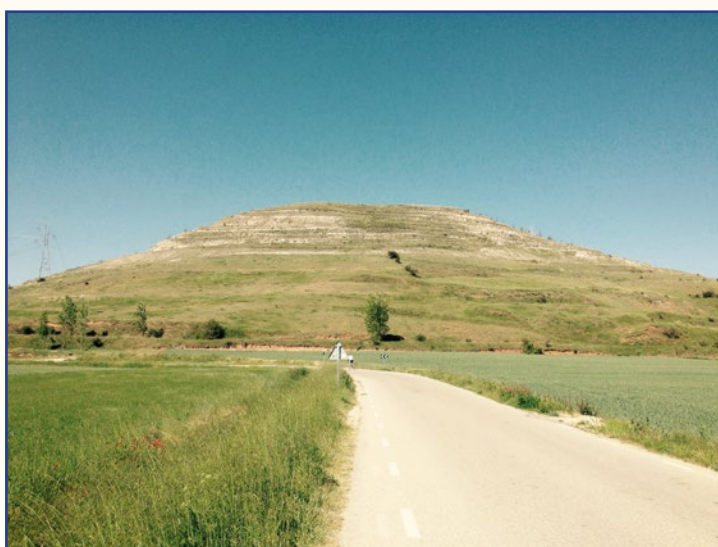
Your breathing takes care of itself. When you find your attention shifting to something you see or hear, or to another body part, gently bring it back to your feet. Your mind will wander; just bring attention back to your feet whenever you notice that this has happened.

You may choose to add a mantra – "I am walking on the earth" or "This is my home" – one word per step, or keep your inner voice silent.

Walking meditation does not have to be slow, but a deliberate, unhurried pace may be ideal.

After a few minutes, scan your body. You may find, as I did on many days, that the soreness in your feet has melted, or dissolved into the background as your awareness of all the sensations of the walk has increased.

Buen Camino! Namaste! ♦



An ideal road for walking meditation.

photo by Janet Meskin, Los Angeles CA

Chapter Snapshot

Connecting pilgrims is so much a part of the work of the Chapters. Over the last quarter we have seen Chapters working with each other to enhance the experiences of pilgrims. The Mid-Atlantic Chapter has planned a September urban trek through Washington, DC with DC Peregrinos while in Asheville the Western North Carolina Chapter has created its own Camino and has planned events with both the Atlanta and Raleigh Chapters. This 16-mile trail (www.ashevillecamino.org) is within the Asheville City limits and includes two hostels, many restaurants, coffee shops, and bars. Pair these amenities with the beautiful French Broad River and a 1,400 ft ascent/descent, and you have the makings of a “Camino away from the Camino.” How wonderful it is that Asheville can share this experience with other Chapters!

Here is a snapshot of the wide ranging activities during the third quarter of 2017 from a sampling of 14 of our chapters that engaged in an astounding 102 activities:

Hikes: 46

Speaker Events: 21

Camino Coffees: 8

Spanish for the Camino: 4

Tuesday Tertulias: 15

Meals/Potlucks: 5

Happy Hours: 4

Shell Ceremonies: 1

Our chapters are working to foster the enduring tradition of the Camino by gathering pilgrims, providing information, and supporting the Camino. If you are interested in getting involved or forming your own chapter, visit <http://www.americanpilgrims.org/local-chapters>. ♦



Albuquerque



Colorado Front Range



Kansas City



Northern California



Puget Sound



Raleigh Area



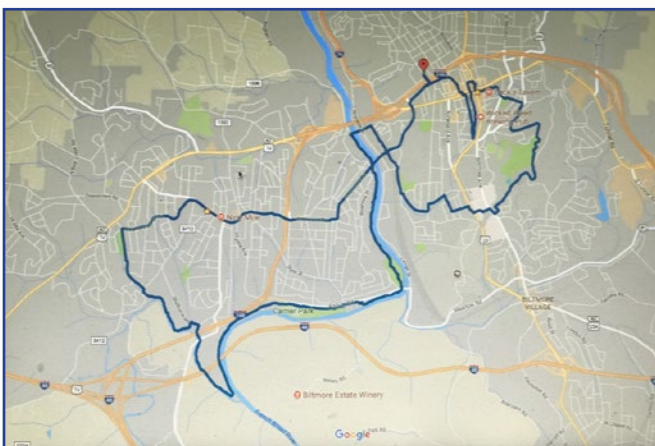
Sacramento



Santa Barbara



Silicon Valley



Western North Carolina

A Hospitalera in Grañón

by Victoria Drexel, Wilmington NC

When one of the new hospitaleras arrived in Grañón to take my place, she asked me, “What has surprised you most about this experience?” My answer was that every morning there were pilgrims I didn’t want to say good bye to—that I wished could have stayed longer, that I hugged tight over their backpacks before they walked on, that I missed.

Before I left for Spain, I thought life as a hospitalera would be all cleaning bathrooms, killing bedbugs, dealing with problem pilgrims, and struggling to maintain a good working relationship with my fellow hospitaleros. I mentally prepared to not really enjoy the experience but feel satisfaction in being able to give back to the Camino. So, by the end of my fifteen days at Grañón, I was surprised that although I’d cleaned a few bathrooms, killed a couple of bugs, encountered one or two problem pilgrims, and didn’t have a common language with my two fellow hospitaleros—I’d had a blast.

As the albergue cook, I managed a large volunteer force of pilgrim sous-chefs every night (my fellow hospitaleros re-named the kitchen the “Restarante Floridita” in honor of my native Florida), and while we chopped, peeled, and poured, I got to know the pilgrims. Some nights I listened to incredible stories of pilgrims who’d started in Rome or who were walking back home from Santiago, some nights we danced to 80s pop music on the radio while we cooked, one night I laughed until I cried



Victoria, in the center, with fellow hospitaleros Carmine from Italy on the left and Cristina from Spain on the right



Grañón at sunset, after the pilgrim meal

trying to learn the word for “carrot” in seven languages, another night I learned the history of Hungary, and on another night, we tried to tackle the questions “What makes the Camino special?” and “Is it just summer camp with wine?” In the cramped, hot albergue kitchen anything and everything could and did come up in



A pilgrim meal

conversation. And just like walking the Camino, I quickly formed bonds with the pilgrims I talked to. By the time dinner was ready to be served, it always felt like we were a big family sitting down to eat.

I volunteered to be a hospitalera because I felt I owed the Camino something in return for the gifts it had given me, but I left Grañón only more indebted to the Camino for the experience. ♦

The Journey Never Ends, 2nd Episode

by Hany Farag, San Francisco CA

There are many stories about the Camino “magic.” This one takes place in episodes. The first episode was published in the March issue of *La Concha* (“The Journey Never Ends”). It told how I started the Portuguese Camino alone and met Josefa and Helga along the way. In a February weekend reunion in Germany, I tossed them an invitation for a second reunion. The amigas took up my offer and landed in San Francisco in May. It was a normal touristic visit until the Camino “magic” struck.

On the last day of their visit we went for dinner to my usual hangout restaurant, Elephant Bar, in Burlingame. After dinner, we went for a walk on a trail by the Bay to enjoy the evening breeze and watch the lights of airplanes descending on San Francisco airport.

A few meters before returning to the car, I saw a bright yellow arrow advancing toward us. I was surprised to see the yellow arrow 5,000 miles away from the Camino. When the person was directly facing me, I asked reflexively “Is this the Camino sign?” The woman stopped and responded “Yes, how

do you know?”

I told the woman, Joan, visiting San Francisco from Singapore, that I walked the Portuguese Camino last September. On the way I met Josefa and Helga from Germany. We had our first reunion in February in Germany and this was our second

reunion in San Francisco.

Joan told us she walked the French Camino last October from O Cebreiro. During her walk, she met eight other people from different countries who are now connected on WhatsApp.

On the day we met her, she had taken her hotel

shuttle from downtown San Francisco to explore the area where we were and walk by the Bay. Her Camino t-shirt, visible under an open sweater, triggered a contact with the three Camino amigas.

It is too much to comprehend, yet this is how the Camino “magic” works! ♦



Joan from Singapore between Josefa and Helga from Germany, standing in front of San Francisco Bay, May 2017

Contributors

- ♦ Susan Alcorn
- ♦ Annie Argall
- ♦ Bill Arney
- ♦ Danny Bernstein
- ♦ James Corbett
- ♦ William Daly
- ♦ Joan DeFeis

- ♦ Victoria Drexel
- ♦ Hany Farag
- ♦ Deborah Hammond
- ♦ Brad Harper
- ♦ Marla Keese
- ♦ Marta Merriman
- ♦ Janet Meskin

- ♦ Lydia B. Smith
- ♦ Lynn Talbot
- ♦ Linda Thornton
- ♦ Dia Utterback
- ♦ Stacey Wittig
- ♦ Abbie Zislis

León Astorga

Rabanal Cruz de Ferro

Molinaseca

⋮

Gaudí Cathedrals

Big Churches Bells

Ring Hourly Quarterly Too

⋮

Each Morning Birds Sing

Bees Buzz Birds Singing

Serenade Us While Walking

⋮

Forgetting Real Life

Spain Our World Now Forever

Real Life Forgotten

⋮

German English Too

Spanish French Korean Too

All Welcome To Walk

⋮

Back Pack Shoes Poles Hat

Maps Water Glide Sandals Buff

Mochilas Transport

⋮

Sun Sky Trails Fresh Air

Sleep Well Awake Early Go

More Sun Sky Fresh Air

Hills Yellow Flowers

Valleys Green Trails Follow Trails

Up Down Up Down Up

⋮

Buen Camino Good Way Go

Santiago Is Our Goal

Keep Walking Steps Go

⋮

East West Spain Go Walk

Hills Valleys Dales Meseta

Green Forests Green Dales

Camino Walk Walk

Santiago Go Hike Walk

Walk Eat Bathe Sleep Walk

⋮

Yellow Arrow Go

Follow Arrow All Day Long

Go Scallop Shell Go

⋮

Pan Torta Tosta

Vino Tinto Cerveza

Zumo Naranja

⋮

Walk Hike Climb Poles Shoes

Breathe Gasp Huff Puff Up Down
More

Back Pack Poles Shoes Walk ♦

Camino Haikus

León - Santiago de Compostela

May 23 - June 6, 2017

by Dia Utterback, Sloughouse CA

photo by William Daly, Arlington VA

Serendipitous Strangers

by Abbie Zislis, Greenwood Village CO

Tonight, I sat down to enjoy a plate of churros (fried pastries dusted with sugar), a caña (beer), and a té rojo (red tea) with a new stranger – Agnes from Germany. She is 54-years-old, but the Camino has aged her slightly...in an enlightenment sort of way. Older and wiser.

Maybe it's the language barrier, but our relationship feels infantile. Squeals, shrieks and hand motions to convey our feelings about breathtaking sights. Some things you can't express in words, anyways. So, it works out fine.

Agnes is a high school choir teacher on vacation from January until mid-April. Last year, Agnes hiked five weeks on the Camino Francés. Now, she is tackling the Camino del Norte, all the way to Santiago.

Agnes and I shared serendipitous moments together, today. Moments with a new stranger that



Playa de las Arenillas (Islares)

I haven't shared with some of my closest friends or family. That's the magic of the Camino. It facilitates spiritual bonds and connections among pilgrims. Real. Human. Fundamental. Connections.

Tonight, Agnes spilled her second glass of wine – shattered glass and an overflowing trail of dark, burgundy liquid slid across the table. Blink twice, and my one and only outfit is covered in red wine.

Suddenly, I remembered how earlier that afternoon—somewhere between a sheep pasture, a neighborhood called Barrio Rocillo, and a verdant



Agnes and Abbie near Castro-Urdiales

mountain range that emulated the Swiss Alps – I told Agnes that last month, shortly after my 21st birthday, I decided that I preferred beer over wine. When it was wine, it had to be white. Sweet, like dessert wine. Agnes replied that she preferred red. How strange. Comparing tastes in wine with a 54-year-old German woman while hiking across northern Spain.

The beauty and the magic of the Camino is that it stays with you. You eat, breathe, and live the Camino. It's more than just a walk. It's a plunge deep into the unknown. It's about trust. Uncertain where the yellow arrows will lead: a mountain range, a diagonal across the seashore, a rural town, a bridge, a meadow, a forest. The options are endless - as are the pilgrims. The people you meet along the Camino shape your Camino. There are many alternate routes to Santiago, and no one route is alike. ♦



Abbie at Restaurante Ambigú in Liendo.

Walking Distance: Pilgrimage, Parenthood, Grief & Home Repairs

by David Hlavsa

reviewed by Bill Arney, Friday Harbor WA

The best books on pilgrimage are about human lives, not just long walks. David Hlavsa's subtitle tells you his pilgrimage book is also about "parenthood, grief, and home repairs." And it is, he writes, "a love letter to my wife," Lisa. This touching, funny, sensitive and wise book is among the best pilgrimage books I've read.

Hlavsa's Camino began on a Caribbean beach. He reflected on his anxiety, mild depression, on wanting "something more," and that he was taking more pleasure from his work than his marriage. Then, to Lisa, he "muttered something ... about wishing our time off from work had more of a sense of purpose." And the rest of his life unfolds from there: The marriage could be better. We should have a child. Oh, the sperm aren't up to snuff and we need medical help for that. Do we have enough "spiritualness" to help the infertility treatments that don't seem to be working and that are pushing us apart? Hey, what if we walked the Camino de Santiago? Sure, let's go... "as a way to prepare ourselves for parenthood." Life unfolds like that sometimes.

In *The Art of Travel*, Alain de Botton says that sometimes you make a radical and often unwelcomed discovery while traveling. You see that "I have inadvertently brought myself with me" on this journey. Hlavsa's account of himself and his marriage while on Camino is engaging and charming for its honesty and insights into himself, his wife, his marriage, and especially the differences between Lisa and himself. We get the towns, the hills, the meseta, the blisters and illnesses, the occasional paradox, the Cathedral and the Botafumeiro. And we also see the slow, subtle, small improvement in the marital relationship and the dawning realization that loaded words like prayer, sacrament, and communion can have more to do with living better in the everyday than they do with religious institutions.

After their mental conversion from "pilgrim" to "tourist" in the paradox in Santiago, Lisa and David go home to Seattle, buy a house (one that needs the "home repairs" of the subtitle), return to the fertility clinic, and Lisa gets pregnant with a

boy they name James.

The subtitle says this is a book about grief, and grief hits hard with the in-utero death of James 20 weeks into Lisa's pregnancy. Hlavsa notes that few people talk about, much less write about, their experiences with stillbirths. Men almost never say anything. But Hlavsa writes beautifully and sensitively, and not without apt humor, about this loss of what he still calls his first child.

Walking Distance: Pilgrimage, Parenthood, Grief and Home Repairs

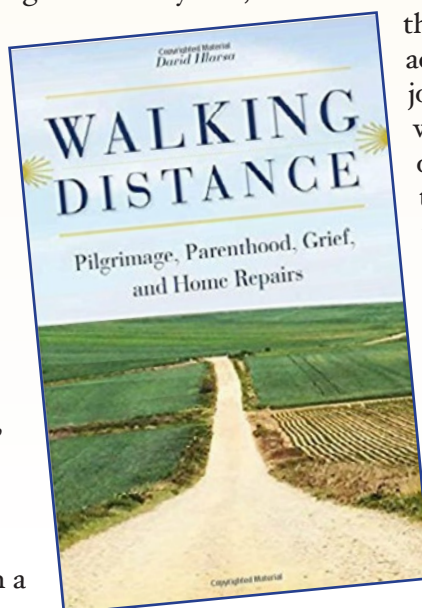
by David Hlavsa

Michigan State University Press 2015
136 pages

The final part of the book is about friends and family. A son, Benjamin, is born, not without difficulty, but he is healthy and beautiful. Hlavsa's father dies. Friends move on with their lives. The marriage strengthens: "Lisa has learned to trust me; I have learned to step up. It works pretty well for us. Your results may vary."

Like the main character in the medieval play *Everyman*,

Hlavsa realizes in the end that it's not his personal accomplishments – his good job, accumulated money, walking the Camino – but deeds done for others that matter: improving the marriage, repairing the house, helping others through grief even as one grieves, trying to be a good parent. I'd count *Walking Distance*, too, as one of Hlavsa's good deeds for the joy in life it shows to others. ♦



Lifetime Members!

We are pleased to welcome the following lifetime members to American Pilgrims on the Camino.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| ◆ Dana Baggett | ◆ Bruce Guthrie | ◆ Victor Prince |
| ◆ Abigail Bornstein | ◆ Peg Hall | ◆ Bruce Robbins |
| ◆ K Andrew Byers | ◆ Sheridan Christian Tully Sun | ◆ Cristino Rodriguez |
| ◆ Kaye R Callaway | Hedley | ◆ Michael Romo |
| ◆ Elaine Chapin | ◆ Diana Huntress | ◆ Jacqueline Saxon |
| ◆ Denise Davis | ◆ Roni Jackson-Kerr | ◆ Julie Scott |
| ◆ Daniel De Kay | ◆ Guy Joaquin | ◆ Daniel Stalling |
| ◆ Cathy Diaz | ◆ Christopher Kelle | ◆ Jeff Stys |
| ◆ Maryjane Dunn | ◆ Sandy Lenthall | ◆ Lynn Talbot |
| ◆ Ben Fisher | ◆ John Long | ◆ John Homer Theroux |
| ◆ Victoria Fry-Ruiz | ◆ Paul Louie | ◆ Sarah Tucker |
| ◆ Michelle Fuller | ◆ Zita Macy | ◆ Anne Uglum |
| ◆ Gwojen Fung | ◆ James Martin | ◆ Karen Wark |
| ◆ Lin Galea | ◆ Yosmar Martinez | ◆ Bryan Winter |
| ◆ James Geier | ◆ Rosann McCullough | |
| ◆ George Greenia | ◆ Gene McCullough | |

A Pilgrim Parable

by James J. Corbett, Newark DE

Last night: The woman and her dog slept in an abandoned building on the streets of an unfamiliar city, taking shelter during afternoon rain. No place would accept the dog, even when the woman begged and offered to pay extra.

Last week: The woman shared during breakfast and on the trail that her Camino included learning to be vulnerable again.

Last month: The woman told people she could not imagine walking the Camino without her dog.

Last year: The woman told her husband she needed to walk the Camino as part of dealing with her loss.

Six years ago: The woman surprisingly became aware again of her abuse as a child.

For more than forty

years: The woman was successful, in control, achieving in business, raised a family. Friends know her as strong, loving, beautiful.

Some forty years ago:

A little girl was hurt. The woman and her dog slept in an abandoned building on the streets of an unfamiliar city, taking shelter during afternoon rain.

Did the dog fail to protect her from her fears of vulnerability? Or was the dog the gift that reintroduced her to vulnerability's strength? ◆



Outside Logroño

Hospitalero Happenings

American Pilgrims continues to be a strong volunteer presence along the Camino. We work closely with the Spanish Federation of Associations of Friends of the Camino to provide hospitaleros in the eighteen donativo albergues the Federation assists. Many of our hospitalero volunteers have also served in private, municipal, and parochial albergues that are not connected with the Federation. Hospitalero opportunities exist in France, Portugal, and Italy as well. ♦

The following new hospitaleros attended the training in August in Los Altos CA.

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| • Deeanne Hamilton | • Juan F Parra Avina | • Margaret Silva |
| • Joy Hayter | • Marilyn Reidy | • Jan Sollish |
| • Paul Hayter | • Amy Reynolds | • Mary Frances Taunton |
| • Suanne Kauffman | • Sebastian Ribeiro | • Janet Willhaus |
| • Rosemary Loughman | • Hector Rodriguez | • Phillip Woodford |
| • Jose Ortiz | • Chuck Rupley | |



There were 53 hospitalero postings to albergues this year by our trained hospitaleros. Thank you very much for your work! If you are on the Camino in October or November you might meet these American Pilgrim Hospitaleros:

Marilu Tejero	Oct 1-15	Estella
Rose Torres-Tumazos	Oct 1-15	Grado
Karen Collins	Oct 15-31	Calzadilla de los Hermanillos
Tisha Cazel	Oct 15-30	Zamora
Mila Caceres	Oct 15-31	Pilgrim House, Santiago
Gilbert Gutierrez	Oct 16-31	Zamora
Amy Reynolds	Nov 1-15	Grañón

Upcoming Hospitalero Training
October 13-15 • Colorado Springs CO

American Pilgrims as Volunteers

American Pilgrims members reach out in many ways to make the pilgrim experience more accessible, collegial, and rewarding for those who are preparing to walk, those who have already walked, and those who are on the Camino.

More than 80 members are the volunteer leaders of the more than 40 Chapters across the country. The Chapter News section highlights some of the activities they organize and make possible.

The Hospitalero News section welcomes another class of hospitalero trainees. More than 500 of us have trained to serve as hospitaleros and many have already served more than once. This past July, three members of the Board of Directors – Zita

Macy, Carmen Marriott, and Cheryl Grasmoe – volunteered together as hospitaleras in Astorga.

A local reporter interviewed them for a story. He was particularly curious to learn why American Pilgrim members would fly across the ocean at their own expense to spend two weeks cleaning an albergue and helping pilgrims they didn't know. The full story is here in Spanish. The quick answers are that volunteering is a way to make the Camino as wonderful an experience for others as it was for them, that being a hospitalera is a way to express gratitude for the Camino experience, and that it is a way to stay connected to the Camino. ♦

Editor's Note: Read the full article in Spanish [here](#).



VIERNES, 11 DE AGOSTO DE 2017

EL FARO astorgano.es | 5

ASTORGA

Voluntarios en los albergues del Camino. Cheryl Grasmoe

Armando MIGUÉLEZ



Poeta en Astorga se presenta esta tarde en Val de San Lorenzo

Libro de A.F. Casado

Ángel Francisco Casado presenta esta tarde, a partir de las 8 de la tarde en el centro de interpretación textil La Comunal de Val de San Lorenzo, el libro Poeta en Astorga en el marco de un recital poético-musical en el que también van a intervenir el profesor de literatura Juan José Alonso Perandones y el ilustrador Santi Omaña. La cita da comienzo a las 8 de la tarde y dada la configuración del acto, se cerrará la puerta de acceso principal a esa hora para evitar perturbar el desarrollo del recital. Casado ha publicado recientemente también Por sus manos, "un humilde y austero monumento escrito dedicado a mi madre y, por ella, a todas las admirables madres de posguerra", infatigables mujeres sacrificadas que con su gran esfuerzo levantaron no solo cada familia, sino la misma sociedad. "Por sus manos las conoceréis" es la cita de ecos bíblicos con la que se abren los cerca de cuarenta poemas que componen el poemario.

Poco se sabe sobre la labor callada que hacen los hospitaleros voluntarios por toda la red de albergues públicos de los muchos Caminos de Santiago que en el mundo sacabeo han sido y son. Y es que ellos no quieren ser conocidos ni reconocidos porque hacen esta labor como para sus adentros. Ana I. Barreda, de la Federación de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago, coordina los más de 6000 hospitaleros voluntarios de unas 40 nacionalidades que se reparten por las redes de albergues sacabeos cada año. No es labor fácil pero que con la ayuda de las diferentes Asociaciones nacionales e internacionales va pudiendo colocarse donde hacen más falta.

La Asociación "American Pilgrims on the Camino" tiene cierta predilección por Astorga y por el albergue de las Siervas de María al que ha contribuido altruísticamente a su sostenimiento a través de su plan de ayudas a las infraestructuras del Camino. Y en este sentido manda cada año varios de sus miembros a ayudar con las tareas "domésticas" del albergue. Este verano vino de hospitalera voluntaria Cheryl Grasmoe, exDirectora de la American Pilgrims on the Camino, y quien nos hace este relato sobre la experiencia, que traducimos a continuación:

"Por que los norteamericanos se pagan su viaje a España para trabajar como voluntarios en un albergue del Camino?"

En la primera quincena del julio pasado, con unas buenas amigas, pasé las mañanas fregando suelos, limpiando platos de ducha y encimeras, de una casa que no era la nuestra. Y también muchas tardes las pasamos inscribiendo y hablando con peregrinos. ¿Y



esto, por qué, te preguntaría?

En mi caso, porque cuando en 2007 regresaba a casa de haber hecho el Camino, me propuse que el Camino no iba a ser sólo algo que hice, sino que quería que siguiera formando parte esencial de mí.

Mis amigas, Zita [Macy] y Carmen [Marriott], también piensan lo mismo. Las tres somos miembros de la Directiva de la American Pilgrims on the Camino. Carmen, de Arizona y yo de Minnesota, somos abogadas jubiladas y Zita todavía trabaja en una inmobiliaria en California. Nuestra Asociación de más de 2000 socios tiene 44 agencias locales por todos los EEUU, que constantemente organizamos actos y funciones para promover el Camino en sus ciudades y municipios respectivos y para compartir con otros las vivencias sacabeas. También, con las cuotas de nuestros afiliados otorgamos donativos y

subvenciones anuales a proyectos de infraestructuras del Camino. A este albergue de Siervas de María de Astorga la American Pilgrims on the Camino ha concedido ayudas para arreglos en ventanas y refectorio, y en la instalación de paneles solares.

Muchos de los 2000 socios de la APC quieren así devolver al Camino lo que éste les ha dado a ellos por haber contribuido al cambio enriquecedor efectuado en sus vidas.

Trabajar de voluntario en un albergue público del Camino es para un peregrino, por un lado, una manera de expresar esta gratitud, y por el otro, es una manera de permanecer vinculado al Camino, aunque sea en una función diferente.

En 2009 hice un curso para hospitaleros y desde entonces he sido hospitalera voluntaria dos veces en los albergues de la Meseta, en Villalcázar de Sirga y Bercianos del Real

Camino. Y he sido también voluntaria en la Oficina del Peregrino en Santiago de Compostela, dando las compostelas o simplemente saludando a los peregrinos a su llegada. Ahora yo misma instruyo a miembros de nuestra Asociación que quieren ser voluntarios en alberguerías del Camino. Zita ha sido hospitalera en Arres y voluntaria en la Oficina del Peregrino (Santiago). Para Carmen, su estancia en el albergue de las Siervas de María aquí este verano, es su primera vez y seguro que no será la última. Las tres todavía nos consideramos peregrinas y continuamos peregrinando en los diferentes Caminos de Santiago cuando podemos. Como hospitaleras vivimos el Camino con añoranza por las historias que nos cuentan los peregrinos que diariamente llegan al albergue.

¿Qué qué tareas hay que hacer en los albergues? Pues ayudar a los hospitaleros de planta a limpiarlos y ordenarlos. Inscribir, y auxiliar a los peregrinos en todas sus necesidades, desde darles consejos de cómo tratar las ampollas, a darles direcciones de dónde hay una farmacia o dónde está la estación de autobuses. Todos nosotros recordamos cómo un día malo de andar se convirtió en bonito por el simple hecho de encontrarte a un hospitalero amable, servicial y acogedor al final de una dura jornada.

También somos conscientes de que muchos de estos albergues tienen dificultades financieras para sostenerse. Haciendo de voluntarios en ellos, contribuimos a su funcionamiento y a preservar aspectos del Camino como la hospitalidad, el sentido de comunidad, la tolerancia y la gratitud, valores éstos que engrandecen al ser humano."

American Pilgrims on the Camino board members Cheryl Grasmoe, Zita Macy (left) and Carmen Marriott (right) show off their cleaning skills.





Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined American Pilgrims on the Camino from May 2017 through August 2017. We look forward to meeting all of you at future Gatherings and events.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ◆ Dave & Mitchell Ahmann | ◆ Jacobus Cilliers | ◆ Shani Fox |
| ◆ Robert & Haley Ahmann | ◆ Janet Clementz-Garza | ◆ Michelle Fuller |
| ◆ Shannon Alderman | ◆ Lawrence Clifford | ◆ Rosemary Generali |
| ◆ Anne Allensworth | ◆ David Condon | ◆ Kristen & Mark Gentry |
| ◆ Pamela Alley | ◆ Edward Cope | ◆ Vicki Giannakopoulos |
| ◆ Diana Altman | ◆ Vicki Copeland | ◆ Thomas Gilbertson |
| ◆ Margarita Alvarez | ◆ Laura Corkery | ◆ Ana Gonzalez-Lane |
| ◆ Mark & Cynthia Amos | ◆ Antonina Crabtree | ◆ Dennis Goodwin |
| ◆ Anne Andert | ◆ Lynda Crandall | ◆ Lucinda Grace |
| ◆ Michele Andrews | ◆ Jeanne Cronin | ◆ Tom Griswold |
| ◆ Leon Andrews | ◆ Frederick Curlin Jr | ◆ Jo Grogan |
| ◆ Joe Arbanas | ◆ Alan Cutter | ◆ Richard Guimond |
| ◆ Delaney Arkeilpane | ◆ William Daly | ◆ Beth Gutman |
| ◆ Kim Bach | ◆ Ingrid Darling | ◆ Julia Hager |
| ◆ Robert Bairstow | ◆ Cindy Dauner | ◆ Deeanne Hamilton |
| ◆ Keshia Bakunawa | ◆ Mark & Mary Davis | ◆ Marjorie Hamon |
| ◆ Dana Ballentine | ◆ Donna De Santis | ◆ Megan Havard |
| ◆ David Barker | ◆ Vicki Delegeane | ◆ Rebecca Hays |
| ◆ Rick Barker | ◆ Julie DeLeon | ◆ Denise Healey |
| ◆ Jammie Baugh | ◆ Robert Deming | ◆ Sandra & Donald Heighington |
| ◆ Kerri Beck | ◆ Daniel Denison | ◆ Virginia Henry |
| ◆ Debra Beighley | ◆ Kathryn DeRosier | ◆ Annie Herman |
| ◆ Vanessa Bettencourt | ◆ Patricia Donahue | ◆ James Horner |
| ◆ Zanya Biviano | ◆ William Donovan | ◆ Richard Hoyle |
| ◆ Greg Black | ◆ Anna Dorwart | ◆ Rita Hurley |
| ◆ Santiago Matias Blanco-Mills | ◆ Marylee Drake | ◆ Peter Jacobson |
| ◆ Nicole Vanessa Blanco-Mills | ◆ Earl Dubin | ◆ Philip Jenkins |
| ◆ Luis Claudio Blanco-Perez | ◆ Elisabeth Duhon | ◆ David Joy |
| ◆ Charlotte Bonilla | ◆ Diane Dulin | ◆ Mark Kamm |
| ◆ Abigail Bornstein | ◆ Chris & Emmett Durnan | ◆ Susan Kay |
| ◆ Russell & Katherine Brehm | ◆ Wendy & Ray Eaton | ◆ Brian Kendzor |
| ◆ Elizabeth Brewer | ◆ Darcy Eggeman | ◆ Jo Kleindienst |
| ◆ Theresa Brinkhaus | ◆ David Eickhoff | ◆ Douglas & Daniel Klimek |
| ◆ Camille Brito | ◆ Clayton Ferguson | ◆ David & Isaiah Klimek |
| ◆ Kathleen & Michael Britt | ◆ Christine, Dwight, & Lane Ferris | ◆ Emmy Kmet |
| ◆ Michael Britt II | ◆ Guy Finetto | ◆ Nancy Konsmo |
| ◆ Melania Bruno | ◆ Henry Finnell | ◆ Beryl Kreuter |
| ◆ Lyle Buckler | ◆ William Finnell | ◆ Wendy Krivit |
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The mission of American Pilgrims on the Camino is to foster the enduring tradition of the Camino by supporting its infrastructure, by gathering pilgrims together, and by providing information and encouragement to past and future pilgrims.

Do You Have Camino Impressions to Share?

With every issue we are delighted anew by the quality, variety, and abundance of submissions – and especially by the fact that so many are from first-time contributors. Your enthusiasm for the Camino and for *La Concha* as a medium for sharing that enthusiasm keeps us going!

So, please keep telling us, in 400 words or fewer, about your Camino. Consider a photo, a poem, or a new found understanding of an idea – a pilgrim's perspective. Please visit Newsletter on our website

for suggestions and guidelines.

The submission deadline for the next issue is, November 17, 2017. We welcome your questions, comments, and submissions at newsletter@americanpilgrims.org.

iBuen Camino!

*Peg Hall, Elaine Hopkins, Steve Lytch, Zita Macy
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