



LA CONCHA

Newsletter of American Pilgrims on the Camino

www.americanpilgrims.com

May 2010

Dear Fellow Pilgrims...

During the course of the Gathering in March, I had occasion to recall Joseph Campbell. In his many works on the subject of myth, he described the hero's journey. It occurred to me that for many the Camino is a hero's journey.

You hear the calling to the Camino, whether through a friend's story, a guidebook left on a table, or a passing reference in a magazine article. You respond to the call, leaving most all that is comfortable behind. You travel into the unknown, and there you confront your challenge, not the least of which may be fear. You overcome the challenge, and out of your struggle comes your boon or reward: your story. You return home, and your heart's desire is to share your story with others.

But it can be an awkward story to share. The modern American consciousness has little concept of pilgrimage, albergues, or Compostela. Still, you want, need to share. Therefore, the Gathering. What better venue to share your story, hear the stories of others who have heard the call, or learn how to go about your own journey?

Sometimes it's a bit too far to travel and maybe too much for the budget to attend the Gathering. Being able to connect with others closer to home would be important.

American Pilgrims has taken steps to help meet a more local need. The Board has approved the

formation of American Pilgrims' first local chapter. The Puget Sound Chapter, based in Seattle, will provide that close-to-home opportunity for pilgrims in Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and other communities in the state of Washington. We hope the Puget Sound Chapter will be a model for others. We encourage you to consider a chapter if you have a group of American Pilgrims nearby.

Regardless, the Camino still calls. In this Holy Year the Camino will be crowded. As the Xacobeo 2010 and the Pilgrim Office requested of us last year, we encourage you to walk, cycle, or ride a horse on a

route other than the Camino Francés. Our web site lists no fewer than 18 routes. The Vía de la Plata is calling me – perhaps not this year, but soon.

So, heed the call of the Camino, meet your challenge, return and

share with us, whether in La Concha, at our next Gathering, or at a chapter event.

i Ultraia!

Jim Eychaner, Chair



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American Pilgrims on the Camino Puget Sound Chapter

We are pleased to announce that on March 21, 2010 the Board of American Pilgrims voted unanimously to accept our proposal to form the American Pilgrims on the Camino Puget Sound Chapter, the first ever chapter. After informally meeting for several months, a small group of pilgrims in the Seattle area decided to form a local chapter for a number of reasons:

- ♦ We believe that this can help support the goals of the parent organization while offering an opportunity for local pilgrims to gather and hold events related to the Camino pilgrimage.
- ♦ In addition to the National Gathering offered by American Pilgrims on the Camino, we believe that engaging pilgrims locally will promote and maintain membership in the parent organization.
- ♦ We will be able to mentor future pilgrims, promote the pilgrimage and American Pilgrims on the Camino through social gatherings, serve as a potential venue for hospitalero training in the Pacific Northwest, and offer the potential for fundraising on behalf of the parent organization.

Our small group met with Jim Eychaner to discuss the possibilities of chapter formation, and he guided us through the process. We have now selected two co-coordinators to organize the local chapter. In April we hosted a Camino get-together on a local Seattle trail system.

*Rebecca Andrews & Martha Crites
Co-Coordinator,
American Pilgrims on the Camino
Puget Sound Chapter*

*New Puget Sound
Chapter of American
Pilgrims
Photo by Martha Crites,
Seattle WA*



Day of St. James Sunday, July 25

St. James' Day on July 25 is always a cause for celebration in Santiago de Compostela. St. James is the patron saint of Spain, and his feast day is a national holiday. King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofía often visit the cathedral in Santiago on that festive day. The celebration promises to be even more spectacular on this, a Holy Year.

Even those of us who are not going to be in Santiago on July 25 – a Sunday this year – can still celebrate the day and honor the spirit of the Camino. Invite friends to take a walk with you on your favorite path or trail, or share wine and tapas or a Spanish meal with friends and pilgrims in your area.

Tell them some of your Camino stories, show your pictures. Sharing is part of the Camino, and July 25 is the perfect day to share the Camino. ♦



*Santiago Peregrino,
Church of Santa Marta
de Tera*

*Photo by Martha López,
Sacramento CA*

Proud to Belong

*By Tom Friesen
London ON Canada*

I proudly belong to American Pilgrims on the Camino and appreciate the depth and breadth of the topics covered in the Annual Gatherings. As a member of the Canadian Company of Pilgrims (CCoP), I also appreciate the local chapter structure, which allows a large number of members to participate for a minimal cost. Each Canadian chapter has its own events, which are a reflection of the resources, size and talents of the local group.

In my home community of London, pilgrims meet weekly at a coffee shop for an hour. We often trade books, news of walking pilgrims, and other information. We also plan dates for future meetings and discuss plans for speakers or activities. Our local group always has Saturday morning spring and fall meetings to welcome back returning pilgrims, encourage those who are leaving, and provide a program of interest. Normally about 40 people attend these meetings, which are held in a church.

The highlight of our year and best-attended activity is the annual St. James' Day walk, when we follow yellow arrows through a historic community. We stop at a lily garden for refreshment, a local church for a pilgrim service, and we complete the

day with a pot luck picnic meal together. We also gathered last year when the Sacred Steps on the Camino art exhibition opened, with 200 people listening to Arthur Boers, Camino author. The exhibition closed with 70 participants attending a panel discussion.

We have also held hospitalero training weekends and closed those weekends with a tapas reception that included an "open mike" opportunity to share stories. Camino information sessions are also held at a local outdoor equipment store. Events are publicized using an email contact list.

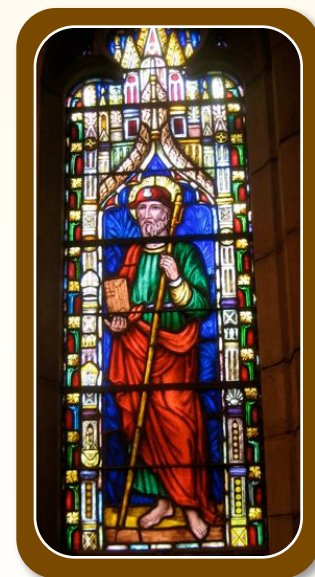
Other Canadian cities host similar events. Kitchener/Waterloo ON hosts potluck dinners twice a year at Hacienda Sarria, a former factory magnificently converted to an event center that makes you feel transported to Spain. The Toronto group restarted last year with Sacred Steps on the Camino and holds spring and fall meetings. Tapas and wine "open mike" receptions in Victoria BC are held after hospitalero trainings and open to experienced and prospective pilgrims. Calgary will hold a similar reception following hospitalero training this spring. Events are well attended.

The CCoP website (www.santiago.ca) posts chapter events across the country. ♦

St. James As American Pilgrim

Images of St. James the pilgrim are commonplace in churches throughout Europe, especially along the Caminos leading to Santiago. The identifiers are with him or depicted separately -- the scallop shell, the cross of Santiago, the pilgrim's hat, his staff, gourd and leather pouch -- and they are represented in stained glass, finely carved images, paintings, and on the printed page. But is the idea of St. James as pilgrim as universal as, for example, St. Francis of Assisi as the patron saint of animals? It is a surprise and delight, sort of like a secret handshake, to enter a church on this continent and discover references to St. James the pilgrim. Be on the lookout, send in your photos -- and we'll all smile. ♦

*St. James' Church,
New York NY
Photo by Annette Argall,
Baltimore MD*



*St. James stained glass, Church of
Bethesda-by-the-Sea, Palm Beach FL
Photo by Daniel De Kay, Occidental CA*



Xacobeo 2010: New Record in Xacobeo Albergues

Our friends at the Xacobeo in Santiago report that during the first quarter of 2010, a total of 30,893 pilgrims have stayed in the 58 albergues located throughout Galicia, a 19% increase over the same period of the previous Holy Year (2004). Additional albergues are still under construction for the Holy Year celebrations.

The statistics also indicate a growing trend in pilgrims discovering other routes in Galicia, the most popular being the Fisterra-Muxía Way, the Vía de la Plata, the Portuguese, Primitive, and Northern routes. It seems pilgrims are finding new ways to discover the beauty of Galicia. For more information, visit [Xacobeo 2010](#). ♦



*Año Santo 2004
Santiago Cathedral*

*Pilgrims and visitors wait to enter the
Cathedral through the Puerta Santa,
open only during a Holy Year*

*Photo by Martha López
Sacramento CA*

Xacobeo Opens U.S. Office

For the 2010 Holy Year, the government of Galicia has for the first time opened an office in the U.S. exclusively for the promotion of the Año Xacobeo in Galicia. The Xacobeo America office is putting in place an extensive campaign throughout American and Hispanic media outlets to educate the public about Galicia, the Camino, and the Xacobeo. This campaign already includes five Camino documentaries, the main one featuring the French route and the others exploring Galicia's four provinces: Lugo, Ourense, A Coruña, and Pontevedra.

The Xacobeo America office was honored to attend the recent Gathering of American Pilgrims in Winter Park. Our team interviewed several members during a day-long visit to the San Pedro Center, and we thoroughly enjoyed meeting such an enthusiastic group. There were people from all backgrounds, but with a common bond: their love and respect for the Camino. It seems the Camino, as well as the beauty of Spain and the warmth of its people, has left an indelible mark on all of them.

Please visit our newly launched website: www.xacobeoamerica.com, showcasing webclips from our American Pilgrims interviews.

*Liz Angulo
Marketing Director,
Xacobeo America*



*Francisco and Jeanette Chacon
interviewed by
Xacobeo America Team
Photo by Liz Angulo, Miami FL*

Hospitalero Happenings

Winter Park Training

American Pilgrims held another successful hospitalero training course prior to this year's Annual Gathering of Pilgrims in Winter Park FL.

Of the 21 participants, five have already received their 2010 albergue postings. To date, we know of 20 volunteer

Volunteer hospitaleros serving in these albergues must have attended a *cursillo* (hospitalero training program). American Pilgrims offers the only Federation-approved training in the U.S.

In March, American Pilgrims commissioned three new hospitalero trainers. Congratulations to Kathy Kennerly of Fort Worth TX and Francisco and Jeanette Chacon of Santa Barbara CA.

In the past, training courses have been offered only once a year in conjunction with our Annual Gathering. Now, with a total of five trainers, we are able to offer training at various locales throughout the country, thereby

reducing both cost and travel time. In fact, the new Puget Sound Chapter of American Pilgrims is identifying dates for a fall training. Our goal is to serve the needs of the membership of American Pilgrims.

We departed Winter Park enthusiastic about our new class of trainers and trainees and formulating plans for at least two additional training sessions this year. We believe this will stimulate the creation of local pilgrim communities as well as a greater awareness of American Pilgrims. ♦

July Hospitalero Training Announced for San Francisco

The San Francisco Bay Area has been chosen as the location for our first local training to be held July 23-25, 2010. Thanks to Crystal Muñoz, a local member, we have secured a beautiful venue in the redwood forest of Mt. Tamalpais, just north of San Francisco.

Other local pilgrims have offered to host attendees, if needed. So far, the response has been very positive and we are hoping this session will serve as a model for similar events around the country.



Here's the group, ready to serve - infused with hospitalero verve!
Photo by Chris Slater, Asheville NC

hospitaleros, trained by American Pilgrims, who will be serving on the Camino - and the year is yet young. Pilgrims from around the world will find American Pilgrims represented in Ponferrada, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Rabanal, Viana, Bercianos, Foncebadón, Estella, Nájera, Zamora, and Logroño.

We work closely with the Logroño-based Spanish Federation of Associations of Friends of the Camino de Santiago, which oversees many albergues on the Camino Francés and Vía de la Plata.



Lodge at Mt. Tamalpais, site of July San Francisco Bay Area Hospitalero Training

If you would like more information about the San Francisco session or helping to set up a hospitalero training course in your community, contact:

Lin Galea or Daniel De Kay at hospitaleros@americanpilgrims.com. ♦

Volunteer of the Year & Lifetime Service Awards Presented at Gathering

As an all-volunteer organization, American Pilgrims on the Camino depends on the time, talent, and treasure of many members. In a ceremony at the 2010 Gathering, American Pilgrims for the first time presented awards to volunteers in recognition of their extraordinary service.

On behalf of American Pilgrims, Board Chair Jim Eychaner presented two awards for **Volunteer of the Year** to **Gene McCullough** and **Rosann McCullough**. As the American Pilgrims webmaster, Gene spends countless hours designing, monitoring, updating, and responding to inquiries on the website. Rosann fields credential requests from members and non-members alike, records the information, prints and mails the credentials – almost 1,200 of them last year. We are deeply grateful for their efforts on our behalf.

Lin Galea and **Zita Macy** were recognized for their commitment and hard work on behalf of American Pilgrims with **Lifetime Service Awards**. Both are among the founding members of American Pilgrims, and both have served on the American Pilgrims Board. Lin has served as an hospitalero trainer for many years, initiated the *Hospitalero News* newsletter for hospitaleros, and organizes local Camino events. Zita is the organization's administrator, whose depth of knowledge about the organization and indefatigable service clearly make her essential to American Pilgrims on the Camino.

All four awardees received a canvas briefcase with the American Pilgrims logo, and Lin and Zita also received gift certificates for an hour of pampering at a spa near their homes. Congratulations and many thanks to all awardees! ♦



Gene & Rosann McCullough



Lin Galea



Zita Macy

Discounts and Deals

From time to time we will report on savings that have come to our attention, either along the Camino or en route to or from. Let us know if you have any to share!

RENFE's Tarjeta Dorada (Gold Card)

Available to the 60+ crowd, Spanish citizenship not a requirement. This card affords you a 40% discount Monday -Thursday on high-speed, long-distance train travel reserved and paid in advance. A 25% discount is available for Friday through Sunday travel as well as to those who have not reserved and paid in advance. However, on medium distance and *Cercanías* (commuter trains), it's 40% every day.

The Tarjeta Dorada cannot be purchased on the RENFE website www.renfe.es. The 5€ card, valid for one year, is available only at RENFE stations, including *Cercanías* stations with a ticket counter, and at travel agencies. Proof of birth date is required.

Flying Around

Vueling (www.vueling.com), Ryan Air (www.ryanair.com), and Spanair (www.spanair.com) are currently offering inexpensive summer fares throughout Spain and Western Europe, often less expensive than trains and buses.

On the Bus

ALSA, one of Spain's largest bus companies, is now offering a 40% discount to the over-60 crowd, every day except Friday and Sunday. See www.alsa.es for further information.

The ALSA website also offers a search engine call the St. James Way Bus, which can help you find the best options to reach your starting point along several Camino routes, and to return from Santiago de Compostela to wherever you choose. ♦

Sunny Florida Hosts 2010 Annual Gathering of Pilgrims

Sunny Central Florida showed its warm hospitality in mid March when scores of pilgrims and pilgrims-to-be gathered at Winter Park's San Pedro Retreat Center. With its new bunkhouse and commercial kitchen for hospitalero trainees and its modern motel-style lodging for the Gathering and Retreat, the Center contributed to a convivial sense of family and community, away from the bustle of the otherwise busy tourist area. It was much like we were back on the Camino again, but in a certainly more comfortable setting!

The theme for 2010, The Camino Today, featured speakers who helped us take in the sights, sounds, and ah, the food, of the Camino of 2010. Two sessions offered insights into how the more committed and adventurous among us can give back to the Camino, and how in the coming years American

Pilgrims on the Camino as an organization can offer even greater support for future pilgrims in Spain.

Our Hospitalero Training started off in a rousing way with Daniel De Kay leading over 20 trainees, the largest group in several years. Following the Gathering, Mary Wallis led this year's Spiritual Retreat, as she did last year in Albuquerque. The

sunny, cheerful chapel on the grounds of the center offered a peaceful respite for Retreat attendees.

The San Pedro Retreat Center is located off the well-trodden tourist paths

in the Orlando-Winter Park area. On the outer edge of a residential area and on the shores of a small lake, it provided a soothing break from our busy world and a venue well suited for our Annual Gathering. American Pilgrims on the Camino is returning to the Center for the 2012 Gathering. ♦



Photo by Karen Montieth, Ridgefield CT

Cabaret Coda

If pilgrimage is a metaphor for life, and life is a cabaret, then isn't "Camino Cabaret" redundant? Whether or not, with the popularity of this session at the 2010 Gathering, it is destined to be repeated at future Gatherings. As many of us witnessed at the Annual Gathering in March, the evening of live, home-grown entertainment brought back memories of any number of evenings gathered with pilgrim friends old and new at some cozy albergue along the Way of Saint James. From original songs, stories, and poetry to classics such as *Mercedes Benz* and *Amazing Grace*, from Camino tattoos to grand gestures, the inaugural Camino Cabaret showcased a range of talents from our membership.

So start rehearsing for next year. We are, remember, an all-volunteer organization. Be ready to pitch in to make this memorable Gathering event happen again! Stellar ideas? Contact Marlena Lambert: gatherings@americanpilgrims.com. ♦



*Cedric Gifford charms his audience at the Camino Cabaret.
Photo by Chris Slater, Asheville NC*

2010 Holy Year Camino Poster Interpretation of the Design

Sylvia Nilsen of the Confraternity of St James of South Africa collated information from several reputable sources and provided the summary below

Modesto Gómez, Director of Enxeño Galicia Archdiocese Santiago de Compostela, the company that designed the poster, explained its symbolism as follows:

We envisioned the road as a melting pot of people who, with their multitude of colors, are pilgrims walking together towards a goal. We envisioned a destination and drew the Quintana with its threshold of reconciliation, a prelude to the embrace that allows us to open ourselves to the world of Obradoiro Glory. We envisioned a style and decided to compose a mural that symbolized the plurality of the road. Rounded at the base and the lower line at the top, it is colorful in its origin.

The top half is full of space and chromatically clean. The poster's scheme simplifies the interpretation of three distinct parts that intersect as a natural representation of the world. The world-view is full of life and color and characterized by a multitude of pilgrims, driven by the spirit in an ethereal mix of "chiaroscuro" (an Italian artistic technique that uses light and dark to achieve a heightened illusion of depth).

Unencumbered, the silhouette of the cross occupies a central plane in which the Cathedral is the goal of the Path. With the Obradoiro blurring the towers in an imaginary overhead shot, we highlight the vision of la Quintana as a Plaza with

the presentation of the Clock Tower and Holy Door in a composition of simple grey lines, adorned by colorful rounded lines.

At the door are three elements that stand out: first the images that humanize the stone. On the other, forming a central axis, are two representations of the apostle. How could it be otherwise in the case of la Quintana, place of living and dead, an apostle recumbent, which is the

guiding light at the end of the road, rising above the door in its niche as a living witness of Christ and the pilgrim who, as a good host, awaits us?

To his right, the clock tower stands as a beacon of hope, a symbol of three essential elements: the clarity, the call and time. It is more symbolic of the temple tower. It represents, in descending order, a glimmer of hope that flows from its guiding light, a perennial call to conversion that resonates in each *badalada* of the Berengaria bell, and a gentle discourse of hours to the rhythm of the needles of a clock that evokes our lives and our history.

At the base we wanted to establish a modern, simple and illuminating logo: from the Roman era to today, Pilgrim Church, at the hands of the cross and *vieira* (scallop), icons of Jesus and James, pilgrimage guided by the light of Christ, walking together, hand in hand with faith, from 2010 years ago. ♦

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I was not surprised that I enjoyed the San Pedro Gathering, but I was surprised by the extent to which my wife, Marina, enjoyed the Gathering. She was amazed by the spirit of the Gathering! I told her that was the spirit of El Camino, and now she is thinking of the two of us making a future pilgrimage.

Cedric Gifford, Acworth GA

Painting My Camino

By Eva Stramer Nichols
Truckee CA

I walked the Camino from St. Jean Pied de Port to Santiago last year in September and October. Being an artist, I chose as my luxury items a tiny box of watercolors, a couple of brushes, and a small watercolor pad, which multiplied to two



Pilgrim Boots I

© Eva Stramer Nichols 3/17/2010

before the end of my Camino. I get a lot of joy looking at my little sketches and remembering where I painted them - somehow they tell me so much more than a blog entry or a photograph.

For the last three months, I've been Artist in Residence at Mendocino Art Center, and one of my primary projects has been to paint from my

Camino experience. What a wonderful way to relive it - and to share the Camino in this way.

When I look at some of my paintings, and compare them to the photos or sketches that I

used for reference, it is obvious to me and my audience that it was a magical experience. In my mind's eye the sky, the colors, and the landscapes were somehow illuminated with the spirit of the pilgrims I met along the way. I will most certainly be painting the Camino for many years to come, and I am already dreaming about my next Camino!

This summer I will be involved in several Art Festivals in Central

California. For additional information, please contact me at eva@mbay.net. ♦



Camino Cross II

© Eva Stramer Nichols
3/17/2010

Mediterranean Evening

by Marjorie Kowalski Cole
Ester AK

The affectionate air, all whisper and caresses...
—San Juan de la Cruz, *Spiritual Canticle*

Like exotic fish released into water
of exactly the correct degree, we surrender
to evening in León.

We have no word back home for this ambience.
Walk into the soft breeze and astonish your skin.

Don't pray so much, take this time to greet
one another, watch small children
tear across the plaza.

This air is what our ancestors knew.
We'll pick up the trail again in the morning. For now
be at home in this softness through which Jesus and Mary,
Suliman and Roxelana, Claudius, Hippocrates
and Homer walked in the evening. The very same.



Award-winning author and former member of American Pilgrims, Marjorie walked from St. Jean-Pied de Port to Santiago in April 2002 along with her husband and 11 year old son. In October 2004, she served as hospitalera at the Gaucelmo Refugio in Rabanal, and thereafter walked from Santiago to Finisterre. Marjorie died from cancer in December 2009. She was 56. We gratefully acknowledge Pat Lambert, Marjorie's husband, for sharing Marjorie's poem and photo.

From the book "Inside, Outside, Morningside," by Marjorie Kowalski Cole. Reprinted with permission of Ester Republic Press, Ester AK, 2010. Originally published in the "National Catholic Reporter" in 2002.

A Camino Miracle

by Gino Del Guercio
South Easton MA

I don't believe in miracles. So it struck me as odd, and perhaps slightly embarrassing, that while walking the Camino in the spring of 2000, my father told me he had come seeking a miracle.

At the time, he was Chairman of the Department of Surgery at New York Medical College. He was a highly educated man of science, trained at Yale Medical School. I had no idea he believed

that he was going to walk across Spain on the Camino de Santiago. My mother, my seven siblings and I were all astonished. He was 71 years old and by his own admission had never carried a backpack a day in his life. He planned to go alone, but my mother convinced my brother Chris and me that we should go along, too.

We were only two days into our pilgrimage and my father was really struggling, out of breath, and leaning at a 45 degree angle due to a muscle spasm caused by his ancient backpack. We stopped after less than five miles and found a place to stay for the night.

That night, as we sat talking in our small bedroom, my father told me the reason for his journey: he had come to ask St. James to teach his grandson to walk. My nephew, Ian, was born the year before with a severe birth defect. His body had practically no muscle tone.

At an age when children were normally crawling and starting to stand, little Ian could not even turn over. My sister had taken him to many specialists, and they all said there was no chance he would ever walk.

The next morning we began again. The Camino proved to be very difficult and complicated for my father. But he eventually finished.



*Dr. Louis R.M. Del Guercio
with grandson Ian Monro
Photo by Francaisca Monro*

Today, to my astonishment, Ian walks on his own, and my father is one of his favorite people in the world. ♦

Dr. Louis R.M. Del Guercio is now retired and living in Larchmont NY. Gino Del Guercio, a documentary filmmaker, has recently completed a one hour film about the journey entitled "The Surgeon and the Saint."



Chris Del Guercio, Dr. Louis R.M. Del Guercio, Gino Del Guercio

in what I considered such old-fashioned things. But in light of what occurred afterwards I have to wonder.

Out of the blue, my father had announced to our family

Update on Walk to Jerusalem

Mike Metras reported in his article *4,800 Miles to Santiago* in the November 2009 issue that he and Petra Wolf are walking from their home in California to Jerusalem via Santiago de Compostela. A recent email reports that they arrived in Santiago after a little more than 5000 miles (not the 4800 they estimated in November) and as of April 19, were headed out of Burgos toward the Somport Pass, hoping to arrive in 15 days. They will then walk on to Arles and points east. Ultraia, Mike and Petra! ♦

Powerful Places on the Caminos de Santiago

by Gary White & Elyn Aviva

Reviewed by Henny de Knecht, Glenford NY

Elyn Aviva has written about several of her caminos. In *Following the Milky Way* (1989, 2001) interspersed with her writings about architecture, history, and her personal experiences on the Camino Frances, she repeatedly refers to "...walking in the footsteps of our ancestors." (p 252) She notes her observation about "...imprints of older meanings, faint fragrances of other ancient rituals." (p 67) With *Powerful Places on the Caminos de Santiago* (2010), Ms. Aviva and Mr. White take us there.

The authors describe specific locations in words and images in the context of history, legends, and personal experiences. The reader is provided with websites and maps. The book has a visually complex layout with room for the reader's own notes. The authors include their own encounters with the healing, mystical forces, and this becomes another layer.

Suggestions are provided to assist "entering the energy" of the places. Our guides clearly explain that visitors respond differently. The places include images, religious-spiritual constructions, and natural settings above and below the earth. Powerful places are "where the veil between this world and the 'other realm' (is) more easily parted." (p 1)

Ms. Aviva and Mr. White guide us to the statue of La Moreneta in Montserrat who can exude "powerful loving energy" (p 15), "peace, and endless patience." (p 11) We read about Suso, the home and burial place of San Millán. Ms. Aviva notes that

others were buried near the saint possibly to share in his holiness (p 45). Older Camino layers include the Dolmen de Cubillejo and a cave opposite the Ermita de San Bartolo. We learn a little about the Camino in the night sky. At San Andrés de Teixido and Cabo Fisterre, we are reminded that "...the most powerful temples are the temples of nature." (p 23)

This is not a linear guidebook. In *Following the Milky Way*, Ms. Aviva notes that "The pilgrimage is a living process..." (p xxv), and to paraphrase author Barry Lopez, pilgrimage cannot be objectified. We "image" aspects and these are not reducible to one truth. In entering *Powerful Places* we have an invitation to expand our caminos. Want to go for a walk? ♦

Powerful Places on the Caminos de Santiago, Gary White & Elyn Aviva, Pilgrims Process, Inc., Santa Fe NM, 2010.

¡Buen Provecho!

Tortilla Española

Anyone who heard Kathy Kennerly's presentation about Spanish food at the 2010 Gathering knows she is not only passionate about the Camino and its pilgrims but also about the food pilgrims encounter along the way. Here Kathy shares with us her recipe for tortilla española.

Ingredients

- ♦ 2/3 cup olive oil
- ♦ 2 pounds potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- ♦ 2 teaspoons salt
- ♦ 6 eggs

Preparation

- ♦ Heat 1/2 cup oil in heavy pan.
- ♦ Add potatoes and 1 tsp. salt
- ♦ Toss potatoes in oil and cook 15-20 minutes, turning occasionally.
- ♦ Drain off excess oil. Place to the side to cool slightly.
- ♦ Beat eggs and 1 tsp. salt until frothy.
- ♦ Add cooked potatoes to egg mixture and allow to rest while preparing pan.
- ♦ Heat remaining oil in heavy skillet and add egg and potato mixture to hot pan. Reduce heat and cook until set.
- ♦ Using plate or lid, turn tortilla over to brown other side.



"Best tortilla I had in Spain"
Photo by Annette Argall,
Baltimore MD

Bring It On

by Karen Hypes
London ON Canada

*The soul should always stand ajar, ready to
welcome the ecstatic experience.*

Emily Dickinson

Orisson to Roncesvalles - April 25, 2009: So far the experiences we have been welcoming have been more excruciating than ecstatic but we are still hopeful. St. Jean Pied de Port to Orisson was a major climb and all in the rain.

The way to Orisson was steeply uphill and hence not conducive to conversation. The silence of our walk was punctuated by clicking hiking poles, loudly labored breathing, and shouts through the mist, "Dayton, are you still with us?"

The refugio at Orisson was a welcome sight. After showers and laundry, we had a leisurely afternoon drinking tea or beer in the bar and writing in our journals. Mine was a three-page treatise and Dayton's was just three words: "Tough, really tough!"

The second day from Orisson to Roncesvalles was in a blizzard. Unbelievable! It was cold, dangerous, and scary. I'm sure I was one shiver away from hypothermia by the time I got to

Roncesvalles. I had mistakenly followed John down a steep, snow-covered descent, sliding and slipping, desperately



*Yellow Arrow: Nearing Col de
Lepoeder, 6 km from Roncesvalles*



*"Bring it on!"
France near the Spanish border*

"What a stupid I am!" Dayton was reminded of this fractured comment from Argentinean golfer Roberto de Vincenzo, who had won the Masters golf tourney only to lose it because he signed an incorrect scorecard. "What a stupid I am" was how he described himself when he inadvertently added an extra stroke to his score. The memory of his comment came as we were all berating ourselves for adding too much weight to our backpacks, against all advice and in spite of all our planning and research.

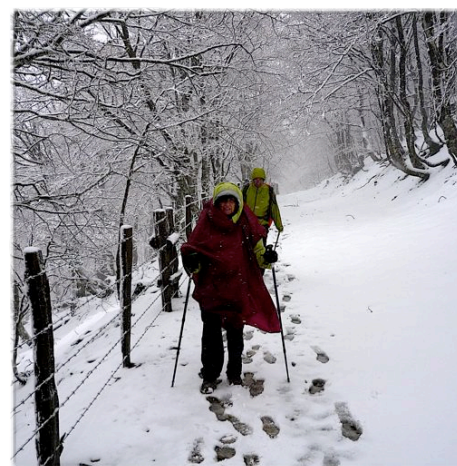
And a lot of good this stuff has done us. John cut his hand slicing an apple and, despite having 4 kg of first aid supplies, antiseptic wipes, Band-Aids, polysporin and what not, we were all too whipped to take off our packs and dig for them, so John just licked the blood off his hand, wrapped it in Kleenex, and we carried on. Highly hygienic!

trying to brace myself to keep from catapulting headfirst, or somersaulting, down the hill.

The icing on this downhill cake was a major wipe out on some slick muddy stones. So then, to add to my misery, I was coated in mud.

So if "life is measured not in the number of breaths we take but in the moments that take our breath away," then this was a breathtaking day. ♦

Note: All photos by Dayton Hypes, London ON Canada



*"So THIS is Spring in Spain!"
Beech forest prior to descent to Roncesvalles*

Winter on the Camino

by Lynn Talbot
Blacksburg VA

Looking for a different Camino experience? Consider walking the Camino in winter. My 21-year-old son and I decided to spend a few days on the Camino this past January and were well rewarded with a new perspective on the pilgrim experience.

Since we had only ten days to walk and wanted to avoid snow, we started in Sarria, where we arrived on January 6th by bus from Madrid. Our Camino took us through Portomarín, Palas de Rei, Arzúa, and Monte de Gozo (in order to make the next day's Pilgrim Mass), and after a day in Santiago, we continued on to Muxía.

While we had wildly changing weather on our first day of walking, our second offered the most memorable experience. After being assured that the snow never accumulates in Portomarín, we awoke to three inches of snow on the ground. Since we were the first to leave town, we left our footprints on the metal pedestrian bridge for others to follow. As we climbed up the hill toward Gonzar, our walk took us through pristine snow with lovely views over the

snow-covered hills. No traffic roared on the nearby highway. The silence was broken only by sparrows and thrushes melodiously chirping in the trees. We paused at the cruceiro at Os Lameiros, dusted with snow, and then continued on through the now muddy streets of tiny villages to Palas de Rei – an unforgettable walk!

A winter camino, at least in Galicia, is relatively easy. The temperatures, usually 30° to 40° F, were not extreme, and, as we were dressed in layers, we weren't cold while walking.

All the albergues were open and heated. We started walking at 8:30 a.m. when it got light, and there were plenty of beds available (usually only four to six other pilgrims), so there was no need to rush. Although fewer bars along the route were open, people seemed more talkative and generous, offering a slice of cheesecake or a bocadillo de chorizo with our café con leche. At the Pilgrim's Mass in Santiago, only five pilgrims had arrived that day.

Walking in winter was like walking the Camino for the first time. Everything – the altered landscape, the small number of fellow pilgrims, the empty paths – contributed to making the experience new. The spiritual depth of the Camino seemed surprisingly available, as if these fresh perceptions brought one's inner thoughts into sharper focus. ♦



Lynn Talbot's son, Andrew Squires, on the bridge leaving Portomarín.
Photo by Lynn Talbot, Blacksburg VA

My Camino as Haiku

The albergue sleeps
An eerie calm fills the night
No snores, no comfort

by Chris Slater
Asheville NC

Bright sun, shining tears
Silv'ry ash slips o're green moss
Río Iso flows

by Cherie Pagett,
Alexandria VA

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry consisting of three unrhymed lines. The first, second, and third lines contain five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. Although nature is the most familiar Haiku theme, you are encouraged to apply the format to any aspect of your Camino experience. Two or three poems will be included in this regular feature of La Concha.

An Act of Kindness

By Bill Lester
Evergreen CO

I left Calzadilla de la Cueva a little late, possibly the last one out of the albergue. I took the N120, a good road with very little traffic, under cloudless blue skies for the first time since I started from St. Jean five days earlier on my bicycle. I was making good time through flat fields that reminded me of Kansas until I got to Sahagún. Up to that point the Camino runs right next to the N120 so I was almost always in sight of pilgrims.

After Sahagún, the N120 goes south before it swings north again so I had to make a choice:

follow the highway or the Camino. I chose the Camino because the surface looked good, and it looked a little more direct. It started as dirt and got rougher the further I rode. I had to walk a few times because it got sandy and my handlebar bag bounced off twice because I was hitting rocks.

I rode five or six miles through green farmland until I finally reached the little farm town of Calzadilla de los Hermanillos. The whole time I only saw one pilgrim. I think I may have taken an old trail rather than the main trail. I was happy to get on pavement again.

An older man and a woman were standing by the side of the road at the edge of town,

possibly waiting for a bus. I sat on a bench near them and had some salami and cheese from my pannier. Another woman came out of a door, and the three of them started talking. I don't speak Spanish, but I heard the word "peregrino" so I thought they were talking about me.

The second woman came over and said something about café, and I nodded. She went into her house and came out with a tray with a small pot of coffee, some warm milk and some pastries that she gave to me. I tried to pay her but she would not take anything. Very nice gesture and an act of kindness -- one of my most memorable moments on the Camino. ♦

Trail Angels

By Susan Alcorn
Oakland CA

Recently my husband and I were walking on an ancient pilgrimage trail in southern France. Our hike was 200 miles - from east of Toulouse to the foothills of the Pyrenees. We walked along the Canal de Midi, then mainly through farmland with corn and sunflowers, and through some forested areas. Best, as always, was the food and hospitality of the people.

One day, walking with a young couple whom we'd met in the *gite* (shared room) the night before, we were so engrossed in our conversations that Ralph and I missed our turnoff for the place we planned to stay that night. We doubled back.

Following our simple map, we couldn't find the little street we wanted. Ralph waved to a passing car. The driver stopped and looked at our map and said (in English), "You are nowhere!" He explained that he had to go pick up his

son at school, but would be back in minutes to help us further.

Jacques pointed the way to his house and we climbed the hill. When he returned, he showed us that our map was incorrect - it was directing us up the driveway of the neighbor, whose dog had recently bitten the postman! Jacques invited us to have lunch, but having just eaten, we declined. We asked about

his good English and he told us he had attended U.C. Berkeley. When we said we had both graduated from Cal, he said "then you MUST come in and have some wine with me."

So we did. Jacques introduced us to his two young daughters and his son, explaining that his wife was at work, and he was the full-time babysitter. The wine he served was definitely far superior to the young wines we usually drank there. He explained that he had had company during the weekend and he wanted us to help him finish off the open

bottles! We also enjoyed being served fruit, pâté, and bread. Jacques was one more example of the trail angels encountered along the Camino. ♦



Home in southern France of Trail Angel Jacques
who welcomed Susan and Ralph Alcorn.
Photo by Susan Alcorn, Oakland CA

Camino Signs

There is no end to the variety of yellow arrows on the Camino. Whether their maker is well-known or unknown, they have the same purpose: to guide pilgrims.

This man drives and walks through Northern Spain every year repainting the yellow arrows that pilgrims rely on. The regional government pays him for his services. The photographer caught up with him near San Juan de Ortega.



The arrow man is caught, yellow-handed
Photo by Randy Bernard,
Norwalk CA

We are often too intent on our goal or too tired to give Camino signs a second look, but this one, taken in front of the cathedral in Astorga, is an



*Photo by Cherie Pagett,
Alexandria VA*

interesting blend of old and new. The signs for both cathedral and street of the Jewish quarter (Rúa de la Judería) harken back to medieval Spain, when multiple faiths lived side by side.



"When you come to a fork in the road, take it." - Yogi Berra
Photo by Eva Stramer Nichols,
Truckee CA



They say the Camino is well marked - just follow the yellow arrows! So I followed her.
Photo by Randy Bernard,
Norwalk CA

Contributors

A special thank you to all the writers, photographers, and artists who contributed to this edition of La Concha. Your talents are much appreciated.

- ♦ Susan Alcorn
- ♦ Rebecca Andrews
- ♦ Liz Angulo
- ♦ Annette Argall
- ♦ Randy Bernard
- ♦ Marjorie Kowalski Cole
- ♦ Martha Crites
- ♦ Daniel De Kay
- ♦ Henny de Knecht
- ♦ Gino Del Guercio

- ♦ Jim Eychaner
- ♦ Tom Friesen
- ♦ Lin Galea
- ♦ Cedric Gifford
- ♦ Dayton Hypes
- ♦ Karen Hypes
- ♦ Kathy Kennerly
- ♦ Marlena Lambert
- ♦ Pat Lambert
- ♦ Bill Lester

- ♦ Martha López
- ♦ Bill Matthews
- ♦ Herbert Medina
- ♦ Mike Metras
- ♦ Eva Stramer Nichols
- ♦ Sylvia Nilsen
- ♦ Cherie Pagett
- ♦ Landon Roussel
- ♦ Chris Slater
- ♦ Lynn Talbot

Pilgriming and Post-modernism: Connecting with the Camino Within

by Landon Roussel
New York NY

What about the Camino has attracted so many people in recent years? In 1985, 400 pilgrims per year arrived in Santiago; now it is more than 400 per day and rising. Something unique about the Camino touches the pilgrim with a deep sense of personal fulfillment not easily accessible in modern life.

I can certainly attest to this. Just before beginning the Camino, I was in my first year of medical school in New York City - an incredibly lonely experience. Mornings were spent in lecture; meals alone in my room; evenings in the library basement studying for weekly tests; and with the added stress, I was sleeping poorly.

On the Camino, in contrast, I could not have felt more in solidarity with fellow peregrinos. The beauty of creation was much more apparent in views of the Pyrenees, the plains of Castilla or the hills of Galicia, meals were no longer alone but in community, evenings were spent in personal reflection, and best of all, I had never slept better in my life.

This prompted me to investigate what about the Camino is so conducive toward such a sense of well-being? An article in *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* observes that several social trends in post-modern society are connected with increasing mental instability*. In my experience, these trends have not altered the Camino's distinct medieval character. People in post-modern society are

increasingly detached from traditional institutions, but the deep solidarity that binds pilgrims in their common purpose to reach Santiago re-couples this broken connection.

In post-modern society, self-identity is no longer defined by traditional familial and religious roles, and people often feel overwhelming distress to carve out a meaningful sense of identity among many options. The pilgrim simply has to eat, walk, and sleep, unencumbered by potentially anxiety-producing choices.

Extreme future orientation in post-modern society is linked to "an increase in despair," while the Camino's "strong sense of cultural continuity

spanning past, present and future" has been associated with mental wellness. Stressful life in Western society often leads to a sedentary lifestyle, but the work of a pilgrim is inseparable from physical exercise.

Now four months post-Camino as I re-settle into NYC life, these contrasts with post-modernity have become more apparent.

Yet the *flecha* emblem on my weathering leather

bracelet from Santiago reminds me that my life is different. The Camino has brought renewed light to the Camino within that guides us even now in our hectic modern lives to true peace and healing, until we are pilgrims in this life no more. ♦

Editor's Note: Landon Roussel has written a longer study on the healing power of the Camino in post-modern society, and it can be found at [American Pilgrims Essays](#).

* Whitley, R. "Postmodernity & Mental Health" *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* (2008) 16(6): 352-64.



View from O Cebreiro

Photo by Landon Roussel, New York NY



Association News

New Grant Program Announced

Our Grant Program, now in its second year, aims to foster the mission of American Pilgrims on the Camino.

This year American Pilgrims will inaugurate the **Michael Wyatt Hospitalero(a) Grant** to help our members to realize an hospitalero volunteer experience and hence allow them to give back to the Camino. This Grant was established in memory of Reverend Michael Wyatt, pilgrim, and Chair of the American Pilgrims Board of

Directors, 2006–2008. The need-based financial grant will partially fund U.S. to Spain travel for trained volunteer hospitaleros assigned to an albergue for a minimum of two weeks; the assignment must be fulfilled in 2011.

In addition, the grant program will again entertain proposals for the following:

1. Infrastructure grants for projects to develop and improve the infrastructure of the Camino de Santiago. These are typically made to albergues or to organizations working to further support and develop this infrastructure.

2. Local event, information, and encouragement grants to North American groups in need of support to organize and hold regional events that bring together past and future pilgrims with the aim of informing and encouraging those who hope to experience or have experienced the Camino.

Applicants interested in any of these grants should visit our website or email grants@americanpilgrims.com in June 2010 for more information and an application. All grant applications will be due on September 15, 2010. ♦

Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined American Pilgrims on the Camino since January 1, 2010. We look forward to meeting you at future Gatherings and events.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| ♦ William Arbaugh | ♦ David Griswold | ♦ Sharon May | ♦ Gary Spurgeon |
| ♦ Seth Brooks | ♦ Ronnie Grundset | ♦ Tom Mc Greevey | ♦ Diane Spurgeon |
| ♦ Eduard Canoura | ♦ Donald Harty | ♦ Dan McLeod | ♦ Karen Spurgeon |
| ♦ Lynn Casmier-Paz | ♦ Michael Hernandez | ♦ Elizabeth Miller | ♦ Dan Spurgeon |
| ♦ Jane Dewey | ♦ Jackie Hughes | ♦ Paul Moses | ♦ Iris Stevens |
| ♦ Angela Donohoe | ♦ Dayton Hypes | ♦ Eva Nichols | ♦ Alexa Stevens |
| ♦ John Eade | ♦ Karen Hypes | ♦ Cecilia Parmiter | ♦ Anthony Turney |
| ♦ Earl Fong | ♦ Evelyn Jackson | ♦ Augustine Paz | ♦ Dacia Van Antwerp |
| ♦ Virginia Fortney | ♦ Christopher Kerstiens | ♦ Elizabeth Quinlan | ♦ Sharon Walton |
| ♦ Martha Gay | ♦ Florence Licata | ♦ Ross Ritter | ♦ Daniel Wilson |
| ♦ Jerry Gillon | ♦ Tim MacMillan | ♦ Gary Ross-Reynolds | ♦ Richard Woodruff |
| ♦ Peter Gillon | ♦ Thomas May | ♦ Lillian Sanpere | |
| ♦ Joan Graybeal-Gillon | | ♦ Cathie Schumacher | |

Finding Our Way Together

Finding Our Way Together has been announced as the winning entry in the recent Tagline Contest. For her creative effort, Kathy Kennerly will receive a year's free membership in American Pilgrims. Congratulations to Kathy, and thank you to the other eight members who submitted possible taglines. ♦



*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 Stories or Events to Share?

We would be pleased to report on Camino-related activities in your part of the country. Tell us about your plans, and we'll try to announce them in *La Concha*.

In addition to announcements and news, please tell us in 400 words or less about a part of the Camino you would like to share with your fellow pilgrims. Consider a photo, a poem, or a new found understanding of an idea – a pilgrim's perspective. Visit [Newsletter](#) on our website for suggestions and guidelines.

Submission deadline for the next issue is July 12, 2010. We welcome your questions, comments, and submissions at newsletter@americanpilgrims.com. You can also submit to the street address provided below.

iBuen Camino!

Your Newsletter Team -

*Cherie Pagett, Annette Argall,
Martha López, Zita Macy*

Board of Directors 2010

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Cherie, Annette & Martha
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Marlena
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Bill & Marlena

Other Key Personnel

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Credentials Distribution: Rosann McCullough
Webmaster: Gene McCullough

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