



# LA CONCHA

Newsletter of American Pilgrims on the Camino

[www.americanpilgrims.com](http://www.americanpilgrims.com)

February 2011

## 14th Annual Gathering of Pilgrims

Join us for the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of American Pilgrims on the Camino at the inspirational Santa Barbara Mission in Southern California March 25-27, 2011. As usual, a two-day Hospitalero Training, March 22-24, precedes the Gathering and a two-day Spiritual Retreat, March 27-29, follows.

This year's theme, ***Voices of the Camino: Past, Present, and Future***, features presenters from all over the U.S. and from Spain. Keynotes include presentations by Dr. John Dagenais (UCLA) on the virtual reconstruction of the Santiago Cathedral as it looked in 1211, the year of its consecration; José Suárez Otero (Galicia, Spain) on the archaeology of the cathedral, and Dr. Sean Raleigh (Westminster College, Salt Lake City) on the music of the *Codex Calixtinus*. Newcomers and veteran pilgrims alike will find many interesting topics in an array of sessions, ranging from the scholarly to the practical. Leslie Woodford will present an intensive Language Learning workshop.

A concert of medieval music by Ciaramella, a musical ensemble from the Early Music Program at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles will take us back to the sounds of medieval Europe.

An Early Arrivals reception on Thursday evening will be your first opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. A blessing ceremony will honor our newest pilgrims, and the Volunteer of the Year award will recognize outstanding volunteer commitments. A morning guided walk and daily Eucharist at the Mission will also be available.

Camino Cabaret, which debuted at last year's Gathering, is back by popular demand. If you want to share your talents at Camino Cabaret, please contact Cabaret M.C. Jim Eychaner at [gatherings@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:gatherings@americanpilgrims.com).

Registration and other information are available on the American Pilgrims website at [2011.GatheringofPilgrims.com](http://2011.GatheringofPilgrims.com). ♦



*Old Mission Santa Barbara*

*Photo by Carolyn Affleck, Sechelt BC, Canada*

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Gathering  
Registration Deadline:  
March 5

## *Gather with us ~*

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Annual Gathering in Santa Barbara in March, the premier venue for connecting with people who share the Camino experience.

In a recent message, Professor George Greenia, acclaimed scholar and among the original American Pilgrims, noted that pilgrims share more than an experience – we share a community.

We want the community that is American Pilgrims to be diverse and inclusive. Whether you have made your Camino journey on foot, bicycle, or horseback; whether your Camino was 1,000 kilometers or the minimum 100 kilometers needed for your Compostela; whether your Camino was a week or a month, alone or with a companion or group; whether you traveled the Vía de la Plata, Camino Primitivo, or Camino Francés; or if you are planning your first Camino, or wish to be a supportive voice for other pilgrims – you belong, and you are welcome.

American Pilgrims is a community of people whose lives have been changed for the better by the Camino. I have been with many nonprofit volunteer groups from a major outdoor club to a

modest ballet company. If you have had experience with nonprofits and boards, you know that the experience is not always positive. People often seem to have an agenda of their own.

Not so in American Pilgrims. Our late chairman and friend Michael Wyatt put it best when he said the American Pilgrims Board was the most ego-less group he had ever worked with. That is true for me, as well, of not only the Board but the entire membership. It's not about us, it's about the Camino.

We are especially happy to announce that a new Chapter of American Pilgrims has been formed. We welcome the Northern California Chapter, which joins the Puget Sound Chapter as an expansion of our American Pilgrims community. Members with access to a Chapter no longer have to wait for an annual event to connect with their fellow Pilgrims. We invite others to consider forming a Chapter. It's remarkably easy.

And we invite you to connect with your community in Santa Barbara. You belong, and you are welcome.

*Join us ~*

*Jim Eychaner, Chair*



*Views of Old Mission Santa Barbara  
Photos by Carolyn Affleck  
Sechelt BC, Canada*



## Spiritual Retreat

### Lingering Voices: Pilgrims' Stories - Past, Present, and Yet to Come

Lingering voices on the Camino - stories that live there, and help keep the Camino alive - walk with us in our hearts and shape our ongoing pilgrimage as we allow the spirit of our pilgrimage to permeate our continued journey. Whether you have made the Camino, hope to make it one day, or wish to be a supportive voice for other pilgrims, you are welcome at this Retreat.

This year's Annual Gathering theme, *Voices of the Camino: Past, Present, and Future* provides a context for our retreat, which will build on the rich legacy of stories available to us as modern pilgrims. What gifts are bequeathed to us from those whose footsteps we follow? What is our legacy, what is our footprint, and what is the Camino's footprint on our lives?

Our 2011 Retreat, led by Reverend Michael Barham, is a chance to listen and talk-story with pilgrims - past, present, and future. Through music, drawing, and other art, as well as through writing,

walking, and contemplation, we will listen to and tell our stories of the Camino. There will be scheduled sessions, opportunities for individual reflection,

group conversations, and freedom to explore solitude, companionship, and your own creativity to renew your pilgrim spirit. If you have suggestions for topics you hope will be part of our retreat, please email [retreats@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:retreats@americanpilgrims.com).

Michael Barham made the Camino in 2001 from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, and returned for a shorter pilgrimage in 2003. In 2008, as part of his doctoral work, he and a fellow American Pilgrim volunteered in an albergue and spent time in Santiago with arriving pilgrims, washing feet and talking-story. He holds a Master of Divinity, and serves as associate

priest at St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Honolulu HI. Outside of church, Michael can be found exploring trails on Oahu, or in an outrigger canoe with other paddlers stroking through the waves. ♦



*Michael Barham*

*Photo by Janet Barham, Meridian MS*

## 8th Annual Hospitalero Training

Hot, dusty, tired and thirsty, I was one of the first to check in that afternoon. There was some classical music playing as I walked into the courtyard of the albergue, Bach I think it was. The hospitalero smiled and asked if I needed a bed. "Yes, please" I replied. "Here, let me take your pack. You can register after you've settled in." The hospitalera then carried my pack up two flights of stairs and showed me a bed near an open window with a view out over some vineyards. "Make yourself at home" she said. The hospitalera's joyful openness reminded me of one of the exercises we do in the hospitalero training titled "Good Hospitalero / Bad Hospitalero." She had been trained by our Canadian colleagues and exemplified all that the phrase "good hospitalero" includes.

Would you like to be that hospitalera in someone else's Camino experience? Would you like the Camino to come to you anew every day? Volunteering in an albergue can do just that, and more. American Pilgrims offers trainings that qualify one to volunteer in albergues along the Camino Francés and the Vía de la Plata.

Our next training will be held prior to the Annual Gathering of Pilgrims at the Old Mission in Santa Barbara. It will span two and a half days of exercises, community, good food, and preparation for the responsibilities and joys of running an albergue.

Come join us! To register, go to [2011 Gathering of Pilgrims](http://2011GatheringofPilgrims.com). For further information, you can contact Daniel De Kay, Hospitalero Training Coordinator, at [hospitaleros@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:hospitaleros@americanpilgrims.com). ♦



## Cíaramella

Cíaramella, the early music ensemble directed by Adam and Rotem Gilbert from the Early Music Program at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles, will treat Gathering attendees to an after dinner concert in the intimate Serra Chapel at the Mission on Friday evening, March 25. We will experience medieval instruments, such as shawm, sackbut, and recorder, rarely seen today and hear music that might have been heard along the Camino centuries ago. This live music performance is not to be missed!

Through their intricate fifteenth-century counterpoint with the ease of jazz musicians improvising on a theme, Cíaramella brings to life medieval and early Renaissance music from historical events and manuscripts. Its members are united by the

conviction that

every

composition

conceals a rich

story waiting to be unlocked through historical research and speculative performance. Founded on a core of winds - shawm, sackbut, recorder, organ, and voice - Cíaramella takes its name from the Italian shawm and from a fifteenth-century song about a beautiful girl whose clothes are full of holes. When she opens her mouth, she knocks men flat.

The Cíaramella ensemble performs at major festivals throughout the United States and Europe. Until the Gathering, you can learn more about the group by visiting [www.cíaramella.org](http://www.cíaramella.org). ♦



*Serra Chapel, where Cíaramella will perform.  
Photo Courtesy of Old Mission Santa Barbara*



*Cíaramella*

## Second Annual Camino Cabaret!

Calling all poets, minstrels, and other pilgrims with a passion to perform. On Saturday evening, we invite you to share a pilgrim song, poem, short story, or skit with other pilgrims! If you wish to be "on the bill," contact M.C. Jim Eychaner at [gatherings@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:gatherings@americanpilgrims.com), providing a description of your performance. Individuals as well as groups are encouraged to participate in this interactive showcase. Camino Cabaret is back by popular demand, its success having been measured not by the number of attendees, but by those willing to share themselves with their fellow pilgrims. We all love a Cabaret!

### Got Tattoo?

Also, be prepared to show off your ink! At intermission, there will be a Camino Tattoo Contest, hosted by Daniel De Kay. ♦

## Walkabout Language Learning: Experiencing the Camino in the Local Language

Do you want to get more out of your pilgrimage by learning the local language(s)? Would you like to get closer to the locals as an hospitalero, deepen your interactions with other pilgrims on the Camino or with natives in Europe as you travel? Whether you are a novice, intermediate, or advanced learner, interested in learning Spanish, French, German, or some other language, Leslie Woodford will teach you five steps to improve your language ability.

The focus of Walkabout Language Learning is “Right Now” language: What do I need to be able to say Right Now? You might not have time for a formal language course, but in this three-hour session, you will create, practice, and evaluate a personalized dialog to use on the Camino. Even if you are already fluent in a second language, please join us so we can practice this language-learning technique with you.

Leslie Woodford has over thirty years experience as a language learner and has taught in a variety of learning settings. She has a Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the

University of Colorado. Leslie has lived and studied in three foreign countries, reaching intermediate level 3 or advanced in Italian, Swedish, and the Solomons Pijin. She has also practiced Walkabout Language Learning in Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, and Russian.

Techniques will be applied from the book *The Whole World Guide to Language Learning*, by Dr. Terry Marshall (Intercultural Press, 1989). Dr. Marshall is Leslie’s father, and she has accompanied him on several language-learning odysseys! Learn more at [Walkabout Language Learning](#).



Leslie Woodford

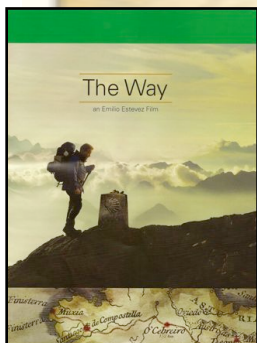
**Pre-registration is required for this special workshop.** To participate, be certain to complete the separate entry on the Gathering registration form. ♦

## The Way

Washington DC: Gathered together by special invitation on the campus of Georgetown University were academics, students, foreign diplomats and representatives, pilgrims, even royalty – and stars Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez showed them *The Way*. Sheen and Estevez followed the enthusiastically received screening with an unstructured Q&A during which their passion for the film and the Camino as well as their affection for each other were evident. Throughout an extended and bountiful reception, they spoke one-on-one with those in attendance and patiently posed for photos. The film is scheduled for September release in the US. [www.theway-themovie.com](http://www.theway-themovie.com).

The screening was the opening for the weekend Workshop on Pilgrimage Studies, organized by one of the original American Pilgrims, Professor George Greenia of the College of William & Mary in collaboration with Georgetown University. American Pilgrims was pleased to provide the initial grant for this workshop which enabled Greenia to obtain the funding required to bring about not only the star-studded evening but primarily the innovative workshop which will lead to further interdisciplinary studies of international pilgrimage and the idea of travel for transformation.

For further information visit: [William and Mary News and Events](#). ♦





## Honoring Our Octogenarians

Walk the Camino at age 80? Some American Pilgrims have done just that, and three share their Camino experiences below. Their young spirits inspire the rest of us and make us contemplate jazz great Eubie Blake's question: "If you didn't know how old you were, how old would you be?"

### 80th Birthday on the Camino

*by Marge McCarthy  
Santa Fe NM*

When I told my husband, Bob, that I wanted to celebrate my 80th birthday in the spring of 2010 by walking the last 100 kilometers of the Camino, I think he thought I was just a little too ambitious. Physical activities have never been my forte, but we "trained" for months by walking miles of trails in our hometown of Santa Fe NM, and I continued my 40 minutes per day on the treadmill. We felt ready.

We planned carefully...reasonable distances each day, hotels rather than hostels, and our luggage carried for us from hotel to hotel.

It turned out that our week on the Camino was a highlight of our lives. We were not prepared for the truly amazing spirit of community, joy, and concern for one another that we found.

Our son Rob and daughter Kathie left their jobs and families and joined us on this adventure. What a beautiful family experience...one we will treasure for the rest of our lives.

We wrote in our Christmas letter that "As we walked, we realized we were in the midst of Peace on Earth." Everyone, literally, greeted us. We greeted everyone. "Buen Camino" was the greeting.

Hundreds of people moving along each day... anyone who needed help got it immediately. No competition. No bragging on the part of those who had been walking for many weeks compared to people like us who only walked 70 miles. Groups of

men and of women, couples, families, individuals... many Spanish but others from all over the world... many Catholics but many others.

What was it like? Like a sample of the whole world walking together in peace focused on a common goal rather than on differences. At the end of our walk we asked Kathie what she thought about the experience. She answered, as if she was startled by her own words:

"This is the Kingdom of God on Earth." Less dramatically, we said: We are in the first decades when the whole world knows about all the rest of the world, where for the survival of all of us, it's more important to stress our community than our differences...our common need rather than our superiority over one another.

We hope the spirit of the Camino can spread to bring peace to our communities and in the hearts of all people. ♦



*Marge and Bob on the Camino  
Photo by Kathie McCarthy  
Bainbridge Island WA*



A local artist captures the Puente Magdalena just east of the old city wall, Pamplona. Pilgrims cross this bridge as they approach the city.

*Photo by Randy Bernard  
Norwalk CA*

## Guided by the Spirit

*By Cedric Gifford  
Acworth GA*

I praise God for the opportunity and ability I had to walk El Camino in 2009 when I received the Compostela to commemorate my 80th birthday! It was a spiritual journey, guided by the Spirit, which culminated in the Cathedral where the spiritual, physical, and rational facets of my life all came together. I live on with vivid memories, and I hope to yet again walk the Road to Compostela.

Most likely I lack the stamina to walk many hills, but I shall repeatedly relive my one experience. I shall probably come upon a labyrinth again sometime like the one at the 2010 Gathering at Orlando. It was a thrill to walk that labyrinth as a pilgrim and greet other pilgrims in passing. The camaraderie of the Pilgrim Gathering made walking that labyrinth special. I shall attend future Gatherings just to be with others who know the special quality of the ancient road. My greatest reward was the joy of performing a little skit at the Camino Cabaret as I reenacted bits of my Pilgrimage.

Even now as I summarize my thoughts, the voices of El Camino call me to live my future in the reality of God's grace and the freedom of



*Cedric - As High as Possible*

eternal hope, no matter my age and probable infirmity. I shall climb trees as high as possible and walk the road further than I thought possible with God as my helper and the Spirit as my guide. ¡Buen Camino! ♦

## La Meseta

*By Dick Carter  
Seattle WA*

Green fields and blue sky  
Meet at the horizon  
Where all is almost seen.  
And where the colors join,  
It's earth and sky,  
Joy and sorrow,  
Life and death ,  
Beginning and end.

But look again!  
Mortal vision has limits.  
The line moves away from us  
And only in our souls  
Can we transcend it.  
We waft along the camino  
Like wind waves in wheatfields,  
Like clouds in blue sky,  
Seeking our horizons  
Where we can unite  
Our certainties with our dreams,  
And at last see God.

*Dick just turned 81. He and his wife did the whole Camino in 2008, then went back in 2009 to serve as hospitaleros in El Acebo, and in 2010 they served in Estella.*



## Chapter News

### *Puget Sound Chapter*

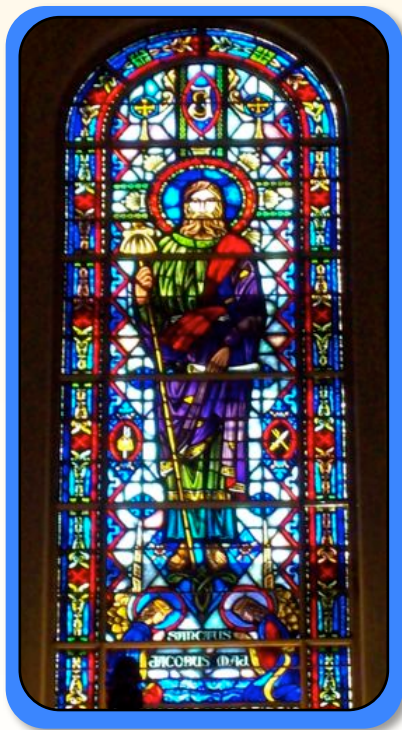
On January 15, the chapter held a rainy walk and tapas potluck in the Sandpoint area of Seattle, hosted by Myrna Aavedal. Local pilgrims met under gray skies and walked in Magnuson Park for a few miles, sharing conversation and umbrellas. Walkers regrouped at Myrna's place to enjoy wine, potluck food, and sharing Camino stories. In the true spirit of the Camino, people who dropped in wondering what the local gathering was about were warmly welcomed, and in all, more than 32 people attended. Several people who came were considering walking one of the Camino routes in the future, or planning to go on a pilgrimage in Spain or Portugal this year.

*Rebecca Andrews & Martha Crites  
Co-Coordina-tors*



*Walkers in Magnuson Park*

### *St. James As American Pilgrim*



*St. James stained glass  
St. Ignatius Church, San Francisco CA  
Photo by Bob Holm, Alameda CA*

### *Northern California Chapter Formed*

A chance meeting in Rabanal between San Francisco Bay area hospitaleros and the invaluable advice of Zita Macy and Jim Eychaner have resulted in the creation of the NorCal Chapter of American Pilgrims on the Camino. The Northern California Chapter is the second local chapter formed following in the footsteps of the Puget Sound Chapter. NorCal thanks them for their groundbreaking work and generosity in sharing their charter and early experiences. It's a peregrino sort of thing.

The NorCal chapter's organizational meeting was held on January 22 at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Pleasant Hill CA. Organized by Bob Holm, Rennie Archibald, and Zita Macy, the meeting was attended by 25 people who traveled from as far away as Carmel and Sacramento. It was a fun group full of the spirit one always finds in a group of Camino enthusiasts. Marsha Holm supplied tapas, and there was enough wine to keep the group mildly lubricated.

There were two high points. Everyone introduced themselves and explained where they had come from and when they did their Camino or planned to do one. We then broke up into five groups and brainstormed what we expected from the chapter. The resulting list will be posted on the chapter web page and a new Facebook page. Bob Holm and Rennie Archibald volunteered to become the co-coordinators on the assumption that others in the chapter will be taking on responsibility for activities.

A good time was had by all.

*Rennie Archibald & Bob Holm  
Co-Coordina-tors*



## On Top of the World in Santiago

By Tom Friesen & Dale Boost  
London ON, Canada

During the Encuentro for Hospitaleros Voluntarios in Santiago de Compostela last December, we visited the rooftops of the Cathedral. We stood on stones placed on the roof of this massive structure, a city block in size, and gazed around the Cathedral, down into the streets of Santiago, and up to the hills around the city to Monte de Gozo. This memorable experience was a wonderful opportunity of which we had not been previously aware.

From the roof, a vantage point a hundred feet off the ground, you see features of the Cathedral from a different perspective. The bell tower and clock tower, the cloisters, and even a look into the Cathedral over the central altar make this experience a real highlight. Through all of the restoration completed on this magnificent structure, it is amazing to see up close the architectural stone features and the original granite roof slabs marked with a scored cross.

Before going to the roof, you will see rooms in the non-parochial area of the Cathedral. The kitchen, *Sala de Armas* (Armory) and the Ceremonial Room of the Palace of Gelmírez are all part of the tour and represent some of the finest civil architecture in Spain. The tour is unhurried and adjusts to the needs and knowledge of the group.

To access the *Cubiertas* (coverings or rooftops) of the Cathedral, go into the doorway on the left side of the staircase at the Plaza de Obradoiro.

Admission is 10 euros, although pilgrims, students, seniors, and groups pay eight euros. The hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. If you book in advance, you can request a tour in English. Groups may and should reserve ahead by faxing a request to 011 (34) 981 554 403 or by sending an email to [cubiertascatedral@archicompostela.org](mailto:cubiertascatedral@archicompostela.org).

Visit the website at [www.archicompostela.org](http://www.archicompostela.org) or go to the following link which will take you there directly in English: [www.catedraldesantiago.es](http://www.catedraldesantiago.es).



*Cathedral Rooftops - Photo by Dale Boost.*

We recommend sturdy footwear with nonslip soles (like pilgrim boots). Remember that Santiago gets more rain than sun, so you should dress for exposed and possibly wet conditions. And do bring your camera and binoculars so that you can fully enjoy Santiago from this new perspective. ♦



## The Way of the First-Century Romans La Vía de la Plata April - May, 2010

By Jan and John Le Pouvoir  
Pollock Pines CA

Yellow arrows guide - and in Badajoz and Cáceres provinces, granite cubes engraved with direction markers. AKA the Camino Mozárabe (for Christian pilgrims living under Muslim rule), VLP follows Roman roads north to its terminus in Astorga. (Note: *plata* here doesn't mean silver, rather broad, surfaced road, Arabic *bal-latta*.)

Unlike its crowded northerly cousin, VLP offers solitude - seeing three percent of the traffic of the Camino Francés; fewer accommodations/ATM's; longer distances between roofs-over-your-head; fewer grocery/bar/water stops. We challenge ourselves, neither of us a creature intent to follow the masses, nor to tackle adventures devoid of unforeseen circumstances or mishaps.

We tread Roman roots' roads and bridges, some of which are now asphalted-over highways, vehicles speeding by frighteningly close; dirt farm roads; fields of Spring's radish/poppy/rosemary; roaming sheep/cattle/*cerdos ibéricos*; blessings of misty mornings/rain-soaked afternoons/icy winds/Extremadura's scorching suns and heat rash, nausea, faintness - they don't call it *Extrema dura* (hard, rough) for naught!

Mérida, World Heritage Site with endless monuments: Roman teatro, Visigoth Church of Santa Eulalia, Arab Alcazaba...kind hospitaleros in Alcuéscar's Residencia for handicapped men (and road-weary trekkers)...learning Valdesalor's roof-and-floor accommodation doesn't exist, our day a LONG

thirty-eight kilometers to the next available roof-for-the-night...Roman Cáceres, historic monument...stone *miliarios*, Roman mile markers, measuring steps north...Extremadura's searing heat...Hervás: Spain's best-preserved Jewish quarter...Baños de Montemayor: coziest, tidiest, quietest bunk set-up in its albergue turístico...

VLP's highest point: 1140 meters atop el Pico de la Dueña, before tumbling into Mother's Day celebrations in crowded San Pedro de Rozados... Salamanca: Old/New cathedrals, museum, Alfonso IX's university, Plaza Mayor, Tuna, Patio de las Escuelas, Casa de las Conchas, Casa

Museo Unamuno... vineyards south of the Río Duero, corn and wheat fields north into the Tierra del Pan... Roman-developed Zamora: Spain's largest concentration of Romanesque churches... Castrotarfe's Castillo's ruins - headquarters of the

Knights of the Order of Santiago...Final twenty-four kilometers end: Astorga - we give thanks: this trip we've time to enjoy Roman roots: original walls, Roman Museum, tasty *mantecadas* and hazelnuts. Crowded streets here shock our previous quiet along VLP, yet treasures of delving into layers of history past - Roman, Visigothic, Arab, Christian - never die amid modernity's hustle and bustle.

Thoughts, wending our way back to Madrid, echo words of Astorga's Pedro Lorente, proprietor of La Tienda del peregrino: "...*Quien tiene la capacidad de aprender y de sorprenderse, es y será siempre joven aunque tenga cien años* ." \* ♦

\*He who has the ability to learn and experience wonder, is, and will always remain, young, even 'though he may be 100 years old.



Local traveler, vicinity of Benavente

Photos by Jan Le Pouvoir



Temple of Diana, Mérida



## Endless Possibilities

By Nancy Golbeck  
Elgin IL

Many years ago, I read a quote "Ideas become real at the point of action." It has been a pilot light for me both personally and professionally. Walking the Camino Francés this past summer was one of my dreams made real. It was my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday present to myself.

My Camino journey began by observing my friend Mary Rooney's face while she talked about the previous two Caminos she completed in 2001 and 2003. There was a spark, a light, a knowing coming from her eyes when she spoke of it. I knew I would make the pilgrimage one day. I took with me many blessings and intentions, and started each morning praying for the person and their intention, or being open to the blessing.

Through the first couple weeks of walking with pain and blisters, I would say to Mary,

"Why the hell would you do this three times?" to which she replied, "It's like childbirth, you forget the pain after awhile." Into the third week I got it. I was in it – I was past the doubts. I magically found myself being present to the moment. In each moment I could do it, I could make it to Santiago. I stopped



*Yes We Can! - outside of Lavacolla 9/25/10. The path was full of courageous individuals with various disabilities.*

*Photo by Nancy Golbeck*

looking ahead or back. I focused only on the next step.

We stayed at an albergue called ANFAS in Estella. Young adults with intellectual disabilities joyfully greeted and assisted us. Then leaving León

we stopped at a bar that Mary remembered and liked. It is run by an association that employs people with disabilities. These two establishments excited me and started me thinking about the possibilities back home in Elgin for additional community appreciation and support for those with disabilities and the

agencies that assist them.

My daughter has had epilepsy since she was thirteen years old. She has triumphed over many challenges.

On September 26, 2010 we joyfully entered Santiago. Mary would complete her third Camino at age 71, putting her in the less than 1% category. Mary walked over 700 kilometers each of her three Caminos, which is an amazing accomplishment. She was the best Camino Amiga ever!

Many have asked me what I learned on the Camino, or how I am different from the experience. When asked, I find myself immediately in the "just now." I feel a place of endless possibilities and a desire to act. ♦

To have courage for whatever comes in life -  
everything lies in that. - St. Teresa of Avila



## 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. Sometimes, these signs are not bright yellow, but they lead us onward, just the same.

### Ephemeral Signs

*By Bridget Highfill  
Los Angeles CA*

Along the Camino I saw many creative signs. However, the signs that I remember with a smile were more ephemeral. I never took pictures of them so I will share the stories.

I entered Pamplona and looked for the Albergue Jesus y Maria. The medieval core of the city can be confusing, but this was compounded by the road construction that rerouted pedestrian traffic. My trusty yellow arrows directed one way and the construction signs bid me follow another street. I started looking at the inadequate city map in my guide.

All of a sudden, I heard a voice calling from on high. I looked up three floors and found that a nice woman was shouting directions to the albergue. This took some effort on her part. The poor woman had to repeat herself a few times due to all of the construction noise, my rusty Spanish, and her elevated height. When at last I understood, I thanked her and set out to follow her directions to the albergue. It was right where she had been directing me, only a block away.

While walking to Nájera, I stopped at a cemetery decorated with Romanesque capitals from a ruined church. I will never know if I took the left turn indicated on my map too early, but the farm road that Felipe and I traveled had no yellow arrows. It did have acres of vineyards and some small rural homes, fenced with many barking dogs. This road did not feel right so Felipe and I discussed turning back a few times in the next few kilometers. We faced retracing our steps or passing a territorial dog in the road, and still no yellow arrows or people in sight.

As Felipe and I warily walked forward, hoping the dog ahead was exercising his lungs, a farmer appeared. When asked about whether we were on the Camino, the farmer explained that all we had to do was follow the same road until we came to a large bodega. There we would see the Camino arrows. Happy at not having wasted an hour walking, Felipe and I thanked the gentleman and continued in the same direction. All at once the road and the dogs seemed more welcoming and Felipe turned to me and said, "*En el Camino, siempre un ángel.*" (On the Camino, there is always an angel.) I realized that I had indeed been finding helpful angels along the Camino. ♦

*Shell with red and white blaze  
near Moistro D'Allier on the Chemin Le Puy  
Photo by Dayton Hypes, London ON, Canada*



*Going in circles near Frómista  
Photo by Roy Draggoo  
Wenatchee WA*

## More Camino Signs



*Turning the corner toward the bridge at  
Hospital de Orbigo, Camino Francés  
Photo by Marcia Shaver  
Redmond WA*



*Córdoba - Camino Mozárabe a Santiago  
Photo by Robert Holm  
Alameda CA*

## Holy Year 2010 in Numbers

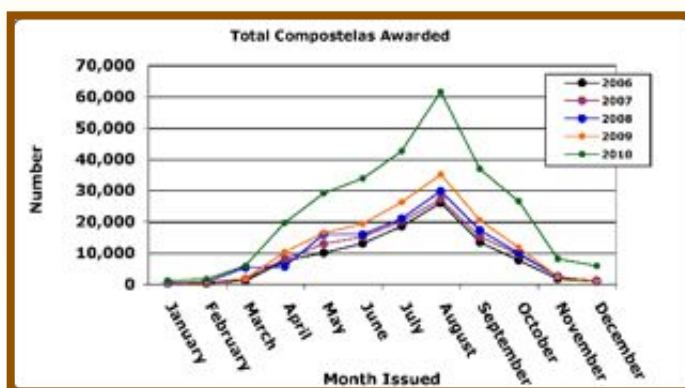
*By Gene McCullough  
Denver CO*

It was surely with some sense of trepidation that many pilgrims set out on the Camino in the Holy Year 2010. Would the Camino be an unbroken river of peregrinos stretching off to the western horizon? The history of the number of compostelas awarded during Holy Years was that the count at least doubles over the preceding year, and with some 145,000 compostelas being awarded in 2009, the predictions for 2010 ranged upwards of 300,000. At the end of the year the official count from the Pilgrim Office in Santiago was 272,458, an 87% increase over 2009, not quite double.

What one kept hearing repeatedly on the route was "Where is everybody?!" That perception depended on where on the route one was standing. Overall there was indeed a large increase in arrivals in Santiago, but those peregrinos as they walked or bicycled were not spread evenly along the Camino. Compostelas issued for those departing from St.-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Roncesvalles combined increased a modest 19% from 2009 to 2010. Starts from León increased 24%, from Ponferrada 62%, from O Cebreiro 135% and from Sarria 158%. From Sarria that was a whopping 2.6-fold increase. The further away from Santiago the start, the lower the percentage increase from 2009 to 2010.

In 2010, American Pilgrims distributed 36% more credentials than in 2009, and the number of U.S. citizens receiving the compostela increased by 32%. Interestingly, the percentage of U.S. recipients of the total was the lowest in at least the last four years. In 2010, only 1.2% of compostelas were awarded to U.S. pilgrims. We are still rare birds on the Camino.

See the American Pilgrims website [Page of Statistics](#) for data for 2010 and several previous years. ♦



## ¡Buen Provecho!

### Stuffed Patatas Bravas

Paul Battjes and his family walked and ate their way along 500 miles of the Camino Francés; and they developed a special relationship with the food of Spain that resulted in a unique cookbook, *Camino Cocina*. You can sample many of the book's recipes or colorful photos by visiting [www.caminococina.com](http://www.caminococina.com).

This recipe is a new twist on a Spanish classic. Battjes had to beg the recipe from the old cook who served it up in a little tavern.

- ♦ Form cold mashed potatoes into a ball shape.
- ♦ Make a hole in center and fill with cooked ground beef, cheese, chopped green olives.
- ♦ Form back into ball, coat with flour and seasoned salt.
- ♦ Deep fry in oil until brown.



*Stuffed Patatas Bravas in a smoky tavern.*

*Photo by Paul Battjes*

Serve with Brava Sauce:

- ♦ Sauté ½ onion & 1 T pimentón in olive oil.
- ♦ Add 2 T flour and stir.
- ♦ Add 2 cups chicken broth.
- ♦ ½ cup tomato sauce, and 1 t salt.
- ♦ Simmer 20 minutes.

### Torrijas

Always eager to broaden her repertoire of Camino recipes in particular and Spanish recipes in general, Kathy Kennerly of Ft. Worth TX recently attended a cooking class given by famed Catalan chef, Daniel Olivella, owner of San Francisco restaurant B44. Dessert was this Spanish version of French toast, simple to prepare and divine. It's not just for breakfast anymore!

#### Fruit Topping

- ♦ 1 cup mixed berries (strawberries and/or raspberries)
- ♦ 1 and 1/2 T sugar
- ♦ 1 T brandy

#### Whipped Cream Topping

- ♦ 1 cup whole cream
- ♦ 1 T sugar
- ♦ Dash ground cinnamon

#### Toast

- ♦ 1 2-day old baguette
- ♦ 2 whole eggs
- ♦ 1 cup sugar
- ♦ 1 cup milk
- ♦ 1 t vanilla
- ♦ Butter
- ♦ Powdered sugar (optional)



*Torrijas*

*Photo courtesy of Daniel Olivella*

#### Preparation

- ♦ Place berries in a bowl, cover with sugar and brandy. Mix. Set aside.
- ♦ Whip the cream mixture until fluffy. Cover and place in fridge.
- ♦ Beat eggs, then add sugar, milk and vanilla. Mix until well blended.
- ♦ Using a non-stick pan, melt butter. Meanwhile, dip bread slices in egg mixture. Place the bread slices in the buttered pan and cook slowly on both sides until slightly brown and crusty.
- ♦ Top toasted bread slice with berries, then whipped cream, then powdered sugar if desired.

Enjoy!



## Hyping The Camino

By Karen Hypes  
London ON, Canada

Monday, Oct. 4, 2010 - Chemin Le Puy - Near Estaing, France

*Dans le silence et la solitude, on n'entend rien de plus que l'éternité. \**

This sentiment engraved on a sculpture we came across as we were entering the village of Aubrac resonates for all Caminos. Whether you are walking along the endless roads of the Meseta or across the open fields of the Aumont Aubrac plateau, quiet moments of thought and reflection pay tribute to a profound sense of history and eternity.

No two Caminos are the same and no two are completely different. A Camino makes friends and enhances friendships. Being open to new friendships is one of the blessings common to all Caminos.

We discovered many differences between walking the Le Chemin Le Puy and the Camino Francés. The pilgrim population on the Camino Francés was more diverse. Here the majority of the walkers are French. We've met more short term walkers where it is more of a walking vacation than a pilgrimage. Here most *gites* and *pensionnes* accept

and even advise that you make reservations rather than the "first to arrive, first to get a bed" custom on the Camino Francés.

This Camino is also significantly more expensive. Most *gites* offer *demi-pensionne* with dinner and breakfast included and, for an increased fee, private rooms and bathrooms.

It is never an easy day on a Camino and the Chemin Le Puy validates my observation. On the Camino Francés we may have had the Pyrenees and O Cebreiro, but here it is relentlessly up and down rocky and uneven terrain all day, every day. It is tougher, but like the Camino Francés, the reward is being able to get to experience and marvel at the history of it all, at the spectacular scenery, and the friendly greeting of the locals as you pass them in the fields or in the villages.

The excited pleasure when you spot that first cafe or patisseries/panadería in the morning is a common joy. It is always appreciated because no matter the Camino, it is always hard, really hard. A pilgrimage

implies penance and an acceptance of suffering, and a pilgrimage delivers as promised. And finally, wet is wet, and Gortex is *not* a perfect product. If it was, then I would not have to return to the gite now to stuff my boots with newspaper and to wring out my socks. ♦

\*In silence and solitude, we hear nothing more than eternity.



*On the Chemin Le Puy - Dayton and Karen entering Estaing, France after a deluge.  
Photo by a Pelerin/Pilgrim from Belgium.*

## 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.

- |                    |                  |                    |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ♦ Carolyn Affleck  | ♦ Dick Carter    | ♦ Nancy Golbeck    | ♦ Jan Le Pouvoir  |
| ♦ Rebecca Andrews  | ♦ Martha Crites  | ♦ Bridget Highfill | ♦ John Le Pouvoir |
| ♦ Rennie Archibald | ♦ Daniel De Kay  | ♦ Robert Holm      | ♦ Marge McCarthy  |
| ♦ Janet Barham     | ♦ Roy Draggoo    | ♦ Dayton Hypes     | ♦ Gene McCullough |
| ♦ Randy Bernard    | ♦ Jim Eychaner   | ♦ Karen Hypes      | ♦ Herbert Medina  |
| ♦ Dale Boost       | ♦ Tom Friesen    | ♦ Kathy Kennerly   | ♦ Marcia Shaver   |
|                    | ♦ Cedric Gifford | ♦ Marlena Lambert  |                   |

## The Never-Ending Camino

By Daniel De Kay  
Occidental CA

Here I sit, the house is quiet, a fresh log is on the fire, the dog's asleep next to me on the couch, sweet Irish music plays softly in the other room. All is well in the world this drizzly day-after-Christmas in Northern California. What makes this scene particularly poignant for me is that it's not my couch, nor is it my dog, my fireplace, my music. And even though I'm the only one here, this isn't my home. I feel a bit like the first pilgrim in the albergue, making myself at home and waiting to see who else will arrive.

My home was sold while I was on the Camino so I continue to be a wandering nomad of sorts. Some dear friends have lent me a room in their house and bade me to feel at home here with them. I'm still living out of the same pack that held all my worldly possessions as I walked from Le Puy to Santiago. My friends have become the hospitaleros, their home my albergue; they have given me the space to rest my body and renew my spirit. They live their lives and allow me to live mine. To me, that's a measure of a true friend, someone who gives you the love and support and space so you can do what you need to do for yourself.

I am reminded of the beauty and simplicity of the hours we spent in one another's company along the Camino. On the Camino there are no long-term expectations of fellow pilgrims. Here with my Northern California friends there are no expectations either, just openness, acceptance, love and caring. I am being reminded of what is truly important in this life: looking out for one another and trying to make each other's day just a little bit better. Each time I walk the Camino I come away with a greater appreciation of simply being present, of the transitoriness of it all, of the importance of acceptance and open-mindedness, of just caring for one another because that's really all we have. ♦

## Paying It Forward

Special thanks to Allison Lenthall and Rahshia Sawyer for their pro bono work in designing a long-awaited promotional hand-out for American Pilgrims. Allison has walked the Camino and donated her work as a way of "paying forward" the pilgrim blessing she received in Santiago de Compostela last year. While not a Camino veteran, Rahshia exhibited pilgrim spirit by carving out time in her 80-hour work week and graduate studies to contribute the graphic design. Muchísimas gracias to both! ♦



The Camino de Santiago is an 1100 year old pilgrimage route throughout Europe that ends in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Thousands of people walk, bicycle or go by horseback every year. For most, the pilgrimage is a time of inner growth, a rewarding physical challenge, and an opportunity to connect with others from around the world. American Pilgrims on the Camino is an all-volunteer organization that supports pilgrims in preparation for their journey, provides on-the-ground support in hostels on the Camino, and helps create a community of past and future pilgrims.

### Information

Whether you are a new or seasoned pilgrim, you can find information on [www.AmericanPilgrims.com](http://www.AmericanPilgrims.com) including historical commentary, travel tips, logistics and more.

### Support along the Camino

American Pilgrims trains volunteers to work at the network of pilgrim hostels and manages a competitive grant program for hostel improvements and promotion of the Camino.

### Shared Community

A large national Gathering is held each spring where pilgrims share their enthusiasm and experiences with those who have gone before and those preparing to go. This Gathering is open to all.

To learn more about the American Pilgrims on the Camino, to donate or to become a member, visit [www.AmericanPilgrims.com](http://www.AmericanPilgrims.com)

1514 Channing Avenue, Palo Alto CA 94303.  
American Pilgrims on the Camino is a 501 (c)(3) organization.



American Pilgrims on the Camino  
[www.AmericanPilgrims.com](http://www.AmericanPilgrims.com)



## Association News

### Bill Matthews Completes Board Term

Bill Matthews, faithful Board member and indefatigable organizer of the 2010 Gathering, stepped down from the Board at the end of his term in December. The Board will miss this gracious Southern gentleman, his thoughtful insights and hard work. Never one to be idle, though, Bill is now involved in fundraising for a project to highlight the unique musical heritage of his corner of Alabama. . . and knowing Bill, he will likely be back on the Camino sometime this year. Bill, we wish you all the best and are grateful for your service to American Pilgrims. ♦

### Grants Awarded

American Pilgrims is pleased to announce the award of a \$5,600 grant to the *Asociación de Amigos del Camino de Santiago de Astorga y Comarca*. The *Asociación* will use the grant to partially finance the installation of solar panels to heat the water of the large albergue in Astorga, the point at which the Camino Francés and the Vía de la Plata converge. The funding will provide critical and eco-friendly support to an important albergue that in 2009 alone served 22,066 pilgrims.

American Pilgrims is also pleased to announce the recipients of the first-ever Hospitalero Training Scholarships: Seth Brooks and Cara Cerise. The scholarships will fund the registration fees for the hospitalero training course taking place as part of the 2011 Gathering in Santa Barbara. American Pilgrims plans to offer a limited number of scholarships to future trainings.

Congratulations to the *Asociación*, Seth, and Cara! ♦

## Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined American Pilgrims on the Camino between November 2010 and January 2011. We look forward to meeting you at future Gatherings and events.

- |                           |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ♦ Jean Ballantine         | ♦ Evelyn Goebel                 | ♦ Patrick Nelson        |
| ♦ John Beck               | ♦ Vee Grinnan                   | ♦ Janet Neville         |
| ♦ Laura Billings          | ♦ Thomas Hall                   | ♦ Ellie North           |
| ♦ David Bohnsack          | ♦ Carol Hammer                  | ♦ Sally O'Driscoll      |
| ♦ Joyce Burke-Estel       | ♦ Matthew & Arika Heffron       | ♦ Charlotte Overby      |
| ♦ Cara Cerise             | ♦ Linda Heiderer                | ♦ Ruta & John Ozol      |
| ♦ Phil & Donna Charneskie | ♦ Laurie Keene                  | ♦ Jan Percival-Lipscomb |
| ♦ Ann Connolly            | ♦ Carolyn Libuser               | ♦ Nicole Rasch          |
| ♦ Erin Corcoran           | ♦ Leslie Lundt                  | ♦ Tachi Robredo         |
| ♦ Jay & Deborah Dement    | ♦ Jean Maguire                  | ♦ Mary Sugden           |
| ♦ Andrew DeVivo           | ♦ Nancy Mahl                    | ♦ Allen Thornburgh      |
| ♦ Samson Elsbernd         | ♦ Christine & Gabrielle Meckley | ♦ Sheila Torres         |
| ♦ Monica Estel            | ♦ Elizabeth & Emily Metz        | ♦ Brenda Trinidad       |
| ♦ James Evert             | ♦ Mary Jane & Chuck Miller      | ♦ Wendell Waybright     |
| ♦ Timothy Foster          |                                 | ♦ Matthew C Wivell      |





*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.*

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## 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 newfound understanding of an idea – a pilgrim's perspective. Visit [Newsletter](#) on our website for suggestions and guidelines.

Submission deadline for the next issue is April 30, 2011. We welcome your questions, comments, and submissions at [newsletter@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:newsletter@americanpilgrims.com). You can also submit to the street address provided below. ¡Buen Camino!

Your Newsletter Team -

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

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## Board of Directors 2011

Jim Eychaner, Chair  
Cherie Pagett, Vice Chair  
Annette Argall, Secretary  
Ann Howley, Treasurer

Daniel De Kay, Camino Support  
Bill Edwards, Communications  
Marlena Lambert, Gathering & Volunteers  
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Carlos Mentley, Gathering

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Cherie & Annette  
Cherie & Annette  
Herbert  
Marlena  
Daniel  
Marlena

## Other Key Personnel

Association Manager: Zita Macy  
Credentials Distribution: Rosann McCullough  
Webmaster: Gene McCullough

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