



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

# LA CONCHA

Newsletter of American Pilgrims on the Camino

February 2012

## 15th Annual Gathering of Pilgrims

Join us for the 15th Annual Gathering of American Pilgrims on the Camino as we return March 29-April 1 to the lovely San Pedro Center in Winter Park FL. The traditional Hospitalero Training, preceding the Gathering, begins with dinner on Tuesday March 27, and the Spiritual Retreat immediately follows the Gathering, beginning Sunday morning, April 1 and concluding by mid-day Monday, April 2.

The theme for this year's Gathering is *Roads Less Traveled* and will feature presentations on pilgrimage in the Low Countries, on the Arles route in France, on the road to Fisterra and Muxia, and more. Chose from informative sessions for new and seasoned pilgrims, the ever-popular Camino First Aid, and learn from an Academic Panel of Camino scholars who will share their findings about "authenticity" in the modern pilgrimage. In response to member suggestions, we have added several new sessions, including Reading the Camino, Camino News from Around the World, and Packing for Your Camino. Two workshops will help

pilgrims enhance their Camino experience: travel photography by Ann Howley and travel writing by Amei Wallach.

A live performance of classical Spanish guitar will follow Thursday evening's Welcome Reception, your first opportunity to greet old friends and meet new ones. A special Shell



Ceremony will recognize those committed to make their first Camino in 2012.

On Friday evening, the inaugural Camino Open Mike session will allow participants to tell their fellow pilgrims about their best or worst Camino experience – in five minutes or less. By popular demand, Camino Cabaret returns on Saturday night.

Lodging at the San Pedro Center is motel-style in shared doubles or, for those wishing to re-create the albergue experience and save a few dollars, a modern bunkhouse is available. In keeping with the theme of *Roads Less Traveled*, this year's evening meals will have an international flavor, with a Valencian theme on Thursday, Portuguese on Friday, and French on Saturday.

Registration and other information is available on the [American Pilgrims website](http://www.americanpilgrims.com). ♦

*Photographs of the grounds of the San Pedro Center courtesy of the San Pedro Center, Winter Park FL*

## In this issue

Chair's Message *Page 2*

Hospitalero Training *Page 3*

Special Workshops *Page 4*

Classical Guitarist Joshua Englert *Page 5*

Chapter News *Pages 7-8*

Camino Signs *Page 12-13*

¡Buen Provecho! - Sweet Pepper Salad *Page 15*

Association News *Pages 17-18*

Member Writings & Photos Throughout

Gathering

Registration

Deadline: March 12



## Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

The arrival of the New Year marks for me a bittersweet moment for American Pilgrims. Bitter, because we say farewell to two Board members: Jim Eychaner and Daniel De Kay, who both served for more than five years. Jim served as Board Chair and Daniel has overseen the training of scores of hospitaleros. They are two of the essential and indispensable reasons why American Pilgrims on the Camino has become the vital and healthy national organization that it is. Their hard work, good humor, and simple human generosity will be missed.

At the same time, there is much to consider sweet. During the past several months, American Pilgrims has realized some wonderful achievements:

- Two new regional chapters of American Pilgrims, the Portlandia Chapter, based in Portland, Oregon and the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, based in Houston, Texas. The West Coast now boasts four regional chapters, stretching from southern California to northern Washington.
- An impressive step up onto the Camino world stage with active participation by Board members at the IX Congreso Internacional de Asociaciones Jacobeas held in Valencia, Spain, and at the first Invitational International Santiago Conference held in Utrecht, the Netherlands.
- A fresh look for the American Pilgrims website, with a more user-friendly navigation system and more beautiful images from the many Caminos to Santiago.
- A reinforced Board of Directors, with three brand-new members—Cheryl Grasmoen, Mona Spargo, and Bob Holm—and a returning veteran—Zita Macy—all of whom I look forward to introducing to you at the Gathering.

Speaking of the Gathering, I hope that you will join us in Winter Park this spring to celebrate *Roads Less Traveled*. Inspired by the conferences in Valencia and Utrecht, this year we have focused on exploring pilgrimage roads other than the Camino Francés, in Spain and in other countries. In planning the Gathering program, we have worked hard to respond to your wishes, expressed in recent years in the Gathering evaluations.

One more note: starting this month, I have been granted the honor of serving American Pilgrims on the Camino as Board Chair. During this time, I look forward to working with you all to continue the growth and development of American Pilgrims at the local, national, and now international levels. I am sincerely grateful for the privilege to enjoy this very special way to give back to the Camino. ♦



*Carlos enjoys paella in Valencia.*

*Join us!*

*Carlos Mentley*

*Chair*

## Hospitalero Training

“Wow, what an October I had in Spain! I took part in cooking meals for almost 600 pilgrims representing 40 countries during two of the absolute best weeks of my life, spent as a volunteer hospitalero in Bercianos. I came away feeling as if my soul had been cleansed and my heart filled to overflowing. The stories, the smiles, the tears, the hours spent with pilgrims and fellow volunteers - I am very happy to call myself hospitalero.”

With this statement Daniel De Kay continues to capture the essence of the volunteer hospitalero experience. Pilgrim numbers are up on all of the Caminos. If you have ever considered giving back to the Camino, this is the way and the time to do so. Please join us for our Hospitalero Training which will be held this coming March 27-29, immediately preceding the Annual Gathering at the San Pedro Center in Winter Park FL. Training highlights will include a wine-and-tapas evening, delving into the history of hospitality along the Camino, learning the art of cooking for multitudes, sharing ideas on spiritual caring, first aid for pilgrims, and much more.



*Hospitalero Trainees Enjoy Tapas and Wine  
Photo by Kathy Kennerly, Portland OR*

Completing this hospitalero training course qualifies you to work in the many albergues that the Spanish Federation of Friends of the Camino oversees. These include albergues on the Camino

Francés as well as the Vía de la Plata. You must be a veteran pilgrim to qualify for the training.

Registration information can be found at [www.americanpilgrims.com](http://www.americanpilgrims.com). The registration deadline for the training is March 12. This ever-popular Hospitalero Training will once again be conducted by Daniel De Kay. Register early to secure your spot. We hope to see you there. Meanwhile, ¡Buen Camino! ♦

## Shell Ceremony Blessing of 2012 Pilgrims

Have you committed to yourself or to your companion(s) to make your first Camino in 2012? If so, we encourage you to participate in the annual Shell Ceremony on Saturday afternoon in the San Pedro Chapel. We will recreate last year's moving ceremony during which 21 pilgrims-to-be received their scallop shells with a mix of traditional Spanish and English blessings.

On your Gathering Registration, you are asked if you plan to start your first Camino in 2012. If you answer “yes”, you will be included in the Shell Ceremony and listed on the program. It is important that we have an accurate count and sufficient scallop shells to present to all participants. If you have already registered, but did not indicate your Camino intentions, please notify [gatherings@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:gatherings@americanpilgrims.com) so that we might give you a proper sendoff. ♦



*New Pilgrims Receive Their  
Shells at Gathering 2011*

*Chapel  
San Pedro Center*







## Spiritual Retreat

Perhaps nowhere is the spiritual intention of pilgrimage clearer than when one walks a labyrinth. To do so is to enter into oneself, creating a sacred inner space within a physical circle, a “still point” for reflection, meditation, or prayer. The return walk to the outside allows an integration of insights or gifts from the center.

Tom Cook will lead this year’s Spiritual Retreat (April 1-2) which will revolve around the theme of the labyrinth. Tom is the regional representative for The Labyrinth Society, serving Florida, Georgia, and the Virgin Islands. He designed his first labyrinths in the 1980s when his love of classical architecture stirred his imagination for the labyrinth’s structure and use. ♦



*Labyrinth at San Pedro Center*

## Special Workshops

### Camino Through the Lens

Most pilgrims bring a camera on their Camino to help capture their pilgrimage experience. In the beautiful setting of the San Pedro Center, the photography workshop will focus on how photography can bring a new dimension to your Camino. Besides some photography basics to help you compose your images, the workshop will help you discover ways to expand your personal artistic vision, and include time to explore the retreat center and share a few images in a workshop slide show. *Each participant should bring their Camino camera, a memory card, and the camera's instruction manual to the workshop.*

Workshop leader Ann Howley looks forward to sharing her love of travel photography with her fellow pilgrims. For Ann, travel and photography have been linked since her first trip to Africa in 1995, that included a borrowed camera and no knowledge of how to operate it. Her Camino also included a borrowed camera and some difficult circumstances. Come learn from her experiences! ♦

### Writing the Camino

Amei Wallach will lead a workshop on Writing the Camino, aimed at pilgrims who want to write about their Camino experience.

Amei is a writer, filmmaker, journalist and program director of the Art Writers Workshop in New York. She received her Compostela from a 2009 pilgrimage, when she accompanied her husband, Bill Edwards, on 350 miles of his 2011 Camino through France and Spain. Her articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Smithsonian*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and *Los Angeles Times*. She is herself a veteran of many writing workshops, in one of which she is currently completing an historical memoir centered on a journey. ♦



Workshop Leaders Ann Howley (l) and Amei Wallach

## Classical Guitarist Joshua Englert



Participants in the Gathering's Thursday evening Welcome Reception can anticipate not only delicious food but also a special musical treat. Classical guitarist Joshua Englert, one of central Florida's leading exponents of classical guitar, will present a live performance of early and contemporary music of Spanish masters Gaspar Sanz, Fernando Sor, Francisco Tarrega, and Bartolomé Calatayud. Joshua selected his primary guitar – that was a year in the making – for the “warmth and sweetness” of its sound quality. Come listen! ♦

## Pilgrim Open Mike

Friday evening at the Gathering will see the debut of a new attraction, the Pilgrim Five-by-Five Open Mike session. With a few pictures to illustrate their story, pilgrims can tell their fellow pilgrims about their best—or worst—Camino experience. But note well! Each storyteller will have FIVE minutes and FIVE slides, and if they go over that limit they will “get the hook” from the stone-hearted emcee! If you would like to participate, please contact Carlos Mentley at [gatherings@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:gatherings@americanpilgrims.com). ♦



## Camino CABARET

“No use in sitting alone in your room...”

Camino Cabaret is back by popular demand, its success at past Gatherings measured not by the number of attendees or, some would say, by talent, but because it evokes evenings at the albergue, when pilgrims share tales, song, and camaraderie. On Saturday evening, Gathering participants are invited to share a pilgrim song, poem, short story, or skit with other pilgrims in the informal setting and interactive showcase of Camino Cabaret. Individuals as well as groups are encouraged to participate.

“Life is a Cabaret, old chum, come to the Cabaret!” ♦



Gathering Haiku  
By Kathy Kennerly, Portland OR

Pilgrims gather here  
San Pedro Center hosts us  
Will you join us then?



## Board Chair Transition: Thank You, Jim! Welcome, Carlos!

As 2011 came to a close, Jim Eychaner stepped down as Board Chair of American Pilgrims on the Camino. Jim was unexpectedly called upon to assume the leadership of American Pilgrims at the beginning of 2009 when ill health forced his predecessor to step down. Although it was a role he never sought, Jim's even hand, quiet strength, and ability to connect the dots while never losing sight of the big picture led our organization through a period of growth and positive change. Thank you, Jim, for your excellent and dedicated service to American Pilgrims!

On January 1, 2012, Carlos Mentley hit the ground running as he became the fourth Board

Chair in the history of American Pilgrims. A professor of Spanish language and literature at Lander University in South Carolina and veteran of many of the Camino routes throughout Europe, Carlos brings a fresh perspective to his new role and has already met some of his counterparts in other Camino organizations at international conferences in Valencia, Spain and Utrecht, the Netherlands last fall.

As if being Board Chair weren't enough, Carlos is also serving as Chair of this year's Gathering. Between his work, American Pilgrims responsibilities, and planning his next trip to the Camino, he is one busy man! ♦

---

## 2011 Camino Statistics Are Out!

*By Gene McCullough  
Denver CO*

Calling all pilgrim mathematicians and statisticians! The 2011 Camino statistics are available, showing some expected trends and some surprises.

- ♦ The total number of compostelas issued by the Pilgrims Office in Santiago during 2011 was 186,504, which is more or less on the long-term trend line for non-Holy Years.
- ♦ The number of compostelas issued to U.S. citizens during 2011 was 3,747 – more than the 3,338 issued to U.S. citizens during the 2010 Holy Year. Americans stayed away from the Camino in 2010 relative to the total population on the route. The percentage of the compostelas issued to U.S. citizens during 2011 was 2.0% of the total number compared to only 1.2% in 2010.
- ♦ While absolute numbers for all of the more common routes continue to climb year by year, the percentage of those traveling the French route continues its gradual decline, with the increased traffic going primarily to the Camino Portugués and Camino del Norte. Between 2006 and 2011 the Camino Francés declined from 82% of the total to 72%. As the great majority of first-time travelers choose the *francés*, this is likely due to repeat *peregrinos*.
- ♦ American Pilgrims issued 1,859 credentials for peregrinos who set out during 2011, up from 1,598 during 2010 and more than twice the number issued four years ago.

A complete rundown can be found on the American Pilgrims [statistics page](#). ♦

## Chapter News

### Portlandia Chapter

On a snowy Sunday afternoon in January, 20+ pilgrims, old and new, met in Portland, Oregon to inaugurate the Portlandia Chapter of American Pilgrims on the Camino. The enthusiastic group remembered Caminos past and promised future Caminos and hospitalero service. We are dedicated to keeping the spirit alive. Portland pilgrims plan monthly walks on our beautiful water front and periodic potluck tapas dinners. ♦

*Kathy Kennerly and Heather Knight*  
Co-Coordina-tors



### Northern California Chapter

Just 13 months ago, 25 pilgrims met to form the Northern California Chapter of American Pilgrims on the Camino. This year, 55 pilgrims and friends met on February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Pleasant Hill for our second annual meeting. About a third of the participants were pilgrims who were preparing to travel the Camino for the first time, so the format was designed so that veteran pilgrims could share their hard-earned knowledge and answer the yet-to-travel pilgrims' questions. The meeting recognized our hospitaleros, members whose dues supports the Camino infrastructure, event coordinators who bring pilgrims together, and those who mentor new pilgrims. All enjoyed the foods and wines of our bountiful potluck!

Members indicated what they would like for future events, including a Pilgrims Blessing, in the coming weeks. Our next event is the American River Walk on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please check our [chapter web page](#) for details on this and other upcoming events. ♦

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

### Puget Sound Chapter

Taking a cue from our neighbors to the north, the Puget Sound Chapter joined with REI to present our version of the 'Practical Pilgrim.' On January 21, over 140 people heard local pilgrims Marcia Shaver and Myrna Aavedal present an evening of information about the Camino, including breathtaking photographs and practical gear advice. Martha Crites and Rebecca Andrews joined them for a Q&A session afterwards. This was the perfect opportunity for those new to the Camino to learn the basics—from historical and cultural background to the practicalities of walking—in one evening. ♦

*Becky Andrews and Martha Crites*  
Co-Coordina-tors







The Xacobeo will send a representative to our Annual Gathering as in years past, although Spain's recent elections have brought about personnel changes there at all levels. ♦

## Southern California Chapter

The Southern California Chapter held a screening of "The Way" on January 29 at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. The 82 people who attended enjoyed the viewing, Camino conversation and ambience, and the tapas and wine potluck. ♦

*Anita Baroldi and Marla KeeSee*  
Co-Coordinators

## Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter has formed and looks forward to sharing news and events with you in the future. ♦

*Mary Jane Miller and Jeff Stys*  
Co-Coordinators

## Reflecting

*By Richard O. Baldwin, Jr.*  
Winter Park FL

In the late spring of 2009, I took 11 days to bicycle the Camino with a group of friends. Since then, I have often thought about why we went, the significance of the trek itself, and the enduring lessons.

Our group decided to organize its pilgrimage as an adventure. Although each of us had a different purpose, collectively, we agreed to do something unfamiliar, physical, interesting, inspiring, and with a historical component. Reflecting, I believe each of us ended the trip with unexpected but treasured outcomes. It seems that places in each of our hearts, as well as our minds, were touched in surprising ways.

Much has been written about the spiritual communion that occurs between pilgrims and their emotional bearings. For me, other internal communions occurred. At 63, I was certain I was



*The author (lower right) and friends, spring 2009*

entering a new phase in life, and I needed a peaceful environment to contemplate that nascent chapter. I was also seeking a period of solitude to validate the era that was coming to a close. During my Camino, I settled up with myself; and, in that regard, I believe it was a priceless experience.

Most people don't achieve the goals they set in life because they either aren't willing to do what must be done or they simply give up. I learned that life is always difficult, as is the Camino - but that there are usually ways to keep going, ways to reward our bodies, our minds, and our emotions with something not easily achieved.

I feel fortunate to have been one of the few in this life to have experienced El Camino de Santiago. ♦



## A Pilgrim's Perspective

By Jenn Ambrose  
Fort Collins CO

The night before I leave for Roncesvalles, I am furiously typing to my best friend: "What if it's just a walk? What if there isn't anything more? What if I'm trying to make meaning, and there really isn't any?"

After four and a half long years of college I had become jaded and stuck in the world of conceptual rhetoric that comes with the ivory tower of higher education. I needed exposure to the tangible and the real, a lesson in existential geography where my learning was based in relationships instead of study guides. So, I fell victim to the same serendipity that has brought many pilgrims to the Camino de Santiago.

I had an incredible 30 days of walking 400 miles of the Camino. I found a rhythm that brought my feet to the path hours before I would have even questioned if I wanted to get out of bed that day. I met people who seemed to arrive in my life exactly when I needed them to, challenging and altering my perspectives of

achievement and value. Every day, autumn leaves in the resting vineyards of La Rioja and the enchanted forests of Galicia would whisper of change and beauty.

I reached Santiago in a state of gratitude and elation that was to be expected; yet I had no sense of completion. The cathedral was beautiful, but I continued west. For three more days I walked, and at the sight of the ocean, I suddenly felt like I had walked a long way. I was overcome with something I will never attempt to explain, and wrote this:

*I reach a crest and see the end of my pilgrimage. It is not a construction of man, whose importance or glory has to be taught from an early age and constantly reminded by images, books, or lectures; no, it is a place whose glory is so immense that it cannot be captured in images, books, or lectures, even when we try.*

*Meaning does exist. And we attempt to explain it with words. When our metaphor of*

*language fails to communicate meaning, it is not that meaning doesn't exist. It's that our language is inadequate.*

The Camino gives space for a visceral voice to arise, one that is usually clouded by thoughts. May we all seek a truth and meaning that is grounded in our experiences. Buen Camino. ♦



Photo by Jenn Ambrose

Going on Pilgrimage without change of heart brings no reward from God, for it is by practicing virtue and not mere motion of the feet that we will be brought to heaven.

From the Book of Lismore (15th century)

*Used with permission from the Irish Society of the Friends of St. James,  
on whose credential these words appear*

## The Road Not Taken

By Charlotte Mitchell Smith  
Winnetka IL

My son Ted and I set off from Ferrol's harbor steps last September. Our plan: Take seven days to walk the Camino Inglés, then celebrate for 10 days in Portugal before Ted started graduate studies in England.

The 2011 Gathering encouraged my long-held interest in the Camino Francés. But, could I walk those 500 miles? Not a hiker, not quite Medicare age, and overweight, my only advantages were stamina and a new knee. Introverted and accustomed to business travel, could I cope with a crowded Camino Francés and its refugios? The shorter Camino Inglés with fewer pilgrims would be a test. If I could complete it, I told myself, I could do the Camino Francés. It was easy to convince my medievalist, travel-loving son to accompany me.

As we began our first day, a heavy mist made brass way markers shine against water-darkened street pavers. At



lunchtime skies cleared, and we left urban Ferrol behind.

We began to enjoy varied scenery: ocean and rias, a 12<sup>th</sup>-



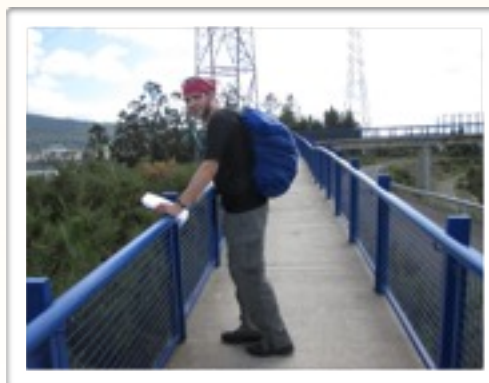
century monastery, small cornfields, yards filled with orchards and gardens, a forested path – even a supersized pedestrian overpass.

It was mid-afternoon when we skirted an old millpond and entered Narón. Intent on finding our hotel, we stumbled when the sidewalk split into upper and lower levels. Ted righted himself; I went crashing down, face-first, propelled by a too-heavy backpack. Immediately passers-by and shopkeepers rushed to help, and an ambulance quickly arrived. The Ferrol hospital treated me promptly and, identifying a broken bone beneath my

left eye, transported me to A Coruña for consultation. Forced home by insurance regulations, I healed well. Ted proceeded to England, disappointed by our aborted Camino, but relieved, I suspect, to turn me over to his father's care.

We did not take the Camino Inglés road after all. Yet, we had our own, unique Camino. We experienced care and compassion. I witnessed my son quietly and gently take charge. I learned to avoid "what ifs?" I began to appreciate my walks as more than mere training exercises. My regrets disappeared when my husband calmly reminded me that risk-taking does not guarantee results.

Will I do another Camino? Walk the Camino Francés? I'm not sure. Ted will try the Camino Inglés again. Not I, but his girlfriend, will walk beside him. If she can't go, will I? Perhaps. I have put the boots back on. They still fit. ♦



Author's son Ted  
Photos by Charlotte Mitchell Smith

## “Bon Camino, Madame!”

By Teresa O’Kane

San Jose CA

On the Camino one usually stays in a dormitory, but whenever possible my husband and I asked for a *matrimonio*, the quaint term for a double room, or *un cuarto con dos camas solamente*, a small room with only two beds.

In one town I pleaded with the hospitalero, “Es posible, señor, un cuarto con dos camas solamente?” “Come with me,” he said, and led us up three flights of stairs to the attic. Under a skylight were two single beds. There was also an ab crunch exercise machine, a desk, a fold-a-bed, and long-forgotten toys. Obviously it was a combination overflow accommodation for pilgrims during the busy summer season and storeroom for the owner. We loved it. “All for you. Todo para los dos,” he said with a smile. As he watched us slowly remove our boots and coats he

added gravely, “Feel free to use the ab machine.”

We did our laundry – a daily hand wash obligation when on the Camino so we could wear one, wash one – strung a clothesline under the skylight, and pushed the two beds together.

Something one should know ahead of time about a refugio is that there are no locks on the doors. It is not uncommon to see a sleep deprived pilgrim, driven out of his bed by snoring bunk mates, walking the halls opening random doors looking for a quieter room to sleep in. We knew there was a slight risk that someone would try to join us in our quiet little room at the top of stairs, but since we were three flights up, I felt pretty confident no one would wander into the room in the middle of the night.

I can’t tell you exactly how many times the door opened during the night but the last time was, let’s say, particularly bad timing. “Oh! Pardon!” a Frenchman exclaimed before retreating. I felt fairly confident the man didn’t see anything more than the silhouettes of our laundry hanging on the line.

The next morning as we chatted with other peregrinos over breakfast of café con leche and croissants in the refugio dining room, a Frenchman announced, “*Buen Camino!* as everyone says to one another before they set off on the trail for the day. As he crossed the room, his eyes settled on me with sudden recognition. He looked me right in the eye, winked, and said, “*Bon Camino a vous, Madame!*” ♦

Karen and Dayton Hypes braved crossing the Pyrenees on April 26, 2009 and retraced their steps on May 8 2011. Fortunately, they survived their first crossing to experience their second – their best day walking, ever!



*Crossing the Pyrenees, 2009*



*Crossing the Pyrenees, 2011*

*Photos by Dayton Hypes  
London ON Canada*



## 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.



*Going Up?*  
Celia Dollmeyer  
Columbus IN



*Translation: Pilgrim friend,  
the extraordinary is in the  
everyday: beer in 20 minutes*  
Jon Wood  
Denver CO



*Go or No Go -- No Question.*  
Alli Delavan  
Long Beach CA



*TV antenna signals the way,  
spotted by Tom's son when they  
were lost coming out of Astorga*  
Tom Fulham  
Alexandria VA



*Near Almadén de la Plata*  
Jim Eychaner  
Olympia WA



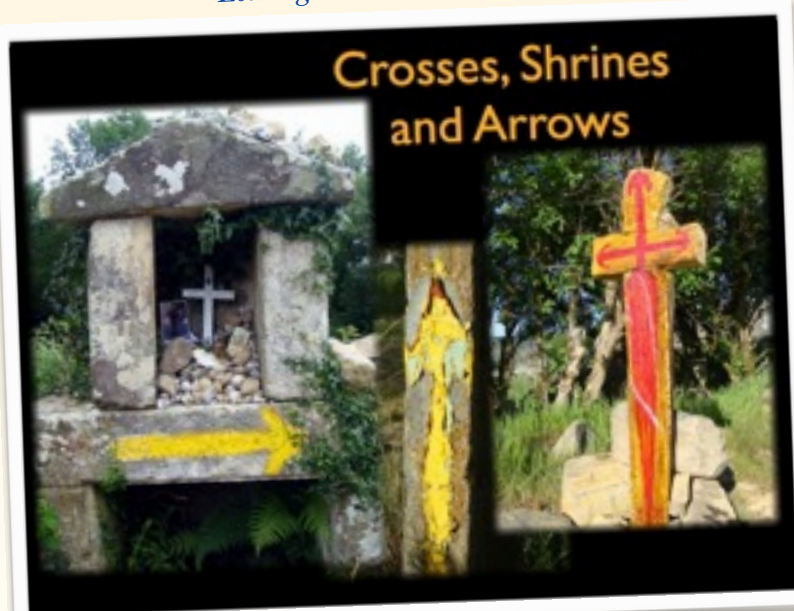


*On the route from Ruitelán to O Cebreiro  
Patricia Gusbikuma  
Los Angeles CA*

## More Camino Signs



*Apples en route to Finisterre  
Gregor McElvogue  
Raleigh NC*



*Sharon Walton  
Pineville LA*



*Double Duty in Vilcha  
Mike Dunican  
Lake Stevens WA*

## Starting Them Young

Maybe it's not a fancy app on your iPad, but neither is the Camino. The young children in your life will enjoy playing *Find the Yellow Arrow*, a game Esther Jantzen of Pomona CA created for her grandchildren. Take them to [Find the Yellow Arrow](#).

iBuen Camino! ♦



## Sharing the Camino

By Peg Rooney Hall

Gainesville FL

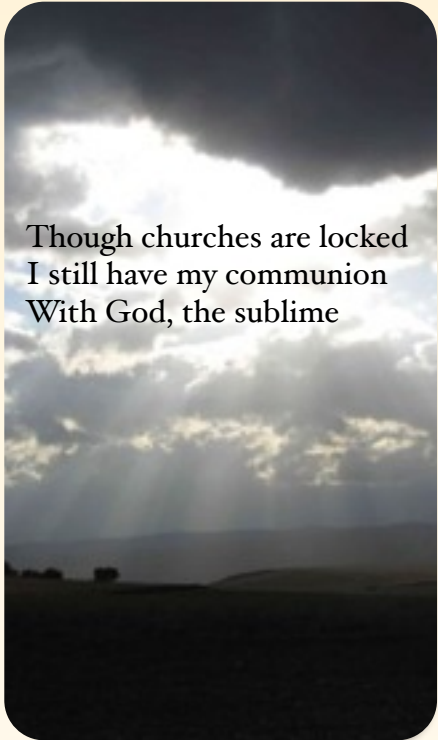
Before retirement and three Camino experiences, my office was two doors down the corridor from a magazine journalist. Post-retirement I linked up with her again when she was one of the leaders of a writers workshop I attended while working on *The Summer of a Thousand Cheeses*, which was published just after the 2010 Gathering in Winter Park. When I saw her last summer soon after returning from our recent Camino, she responded to hearing about it like so many do...“You walked 300 miles...you’ve got to be kidding!” Ahh...bragging rights claimed again!

Being a journalist, her second reaction was that there has to be a story in this. If she was so intrigued, and even wanted to try to get her husband and teenage sons to consider a Camino walk, others would want to hear the story too. That is how I got to write an article for the *Gainesville* magazine. The story was targeted for people who never heard of the Camino before. It was great fun to write and I am pleased to share it with you. The link is [here](#). ♦

## Camino Haiku

By Jenn Ambrose

Fort Collins CO



Though churches are locked  
I still have my communion  
With God, the sublime

## Lessons that I Learned on the Camino de Santiago

By Roger Alden Anderson

Cardiff CA

- 1) Get moving, losing weight can be fun.
- 2) Don't make the destination the only goal. Stop to enjoy the little things like the towns, the flowers, the food, the wine, the people.
- 3) Push yourself and know that you are much more than you think you are.
- 4) To get to know people you have to match their pace and stop expecting everyone to match yours.
- 5) Learn to carry your pack even if it is too heavy and your feet hurt and your mind is on the cold beer in the next town.
- 6) Frustration can make you more tired than walking 27 kilometers in a day.
- 7) Know that you will be exhausted, wiped out, dirty, in pain, frustrated, humiliated, hungry, thirsty, angry - and all of this leads to ultimate happiness.
- 8) Know that as the journey gets harder you get stronger, but even if you learn to carry your burdens with ease, you still need to take off your pack at the end of the day and enjoy the freedom.
- 9) Know that the Camino is a river, a river of humanity flowing in the same direction to a single destination. You are like a leaf on this river constantly drifting, flowing, merging, shifting, and then ultimately stretching.
- 10) When we pick up a stone and carry it for a while, it represents a burden, a prayer, or a wish that is truly meaningful in our lives. We then place it on a waymarker or a cross on the path to somehow remind us that, with God's help, the release of most of our problems can be just that simple. ♦

## iBuen Provecho!

### Sweet Pepper Salad with Manchego Cheese and Almonds

*By Laura Chenel (of goat cheese fame)  
From Best American Recipes 2004-2005  
Submitted by Cherie Pagett  
Alexandria VA*

This salad is not only visually stunning, it's also delicious and quintessentially Spanish – a hit served as lunch with good bread, as *primer plato*, or to share at a potluck. Using the suggested shortcuts, it goes together quickly and can be prepared in advance and assembled at the last minute. In our house, we always double the recipe – the leftovers (if there are any) are terrific!

- ◆ 2 tsp vegetable oil
- ◆ ½ cups whole blanched almonds
- ◆ 2 C roasted red peppers cut into ½ x 2" strips (see notes)
- ◆ ¼ cups extra-virgin olive oil
- ◆ 2 Tbs sherry vinegar
- ◆ 1 large garlic clove, minced
- ◆ 1 ½ tsp chopped drained capers
- ◆ ½ tsp finely chopped fresh thyme
- ◆ ½ tsp minced fresh marjoram
- ◆ Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ◆ 20 small pitted green olives
- ◆ 4 oz Manchego cheese cut into ¼" thick slices
- ◆ 1 Tbs minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ◆ Crusty bread for serving

Heat the vegetable oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the almonds and cook, stirring, until golden, about 5 minutes. Transfer to paper towels and let cool, then coarsely chop. Arrange peppers on a platter. In a small bowl, combine the olive oil, vinegar, garlic capers, thyme, and marjoram. Season with salt and pepper to taste and drizzle over the peppers. Top with the green olives, almonds, and cheese cut into small pennant-shaped triangles and scatter them over the peppers. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve with crusty bread. Serves 4.

Notes: At specialty grocery stores you can find smoky red Spanish fresh roasted peppers, toasted Spanish Marcona almonds, and Manchego cheese. More economical is to buy the sweet roasted peppers in jars at stores like Costco where they also carry large jars of the Marcona almonds and good Manchego cheese.

To roast red peppers (a time-consuming and arduous task for the number you'll need), preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cut the peppers in half and remove the stems and seeds. Place them skin down on a foil-covered baking sheet and roast for 20-30 minutes, until the skins take on some color. Remove the skins, but don't rinse the peppers or you'll lose the flavor. ◆



*Sweet Pepper Salad  
with Manchego Cheese and Almonds  
Photo by Annette Argall  
Baltimore MD*





## The Looking Glass

By Paul Moylan  
Ottawa ON Canada

The Camino de Santiago is a looking-glass experience. Not of tea parties and rabbits, this one filters life—the truly important from the merely necessary. For a month on the Camino, the modern of our world is blissfully absent, a delicious personal time suspending the busyness of life, multitasking silent. The journey uncovers inner peacefulness for most; the simplistic lifestyle allows our physical, emotional, and spiritual beings to become reacquainted, rebalanced. The kindness and generosity of both walkers and villagers inspires on a grand scale. In the gentleness of the natural, the historic, and the calm, the inner being of pilgrims and the spirit of the divine intertwine to create a sense of perfect harmony, perhaps even grace. Drawn in are the loves and blessings of life, past and current, all wonderfully present. Left outside the looking glass are the nonessentials of the contemporary world. Stepping

into this Camino world near the French-Spanish border requires a month's commitment. Departing Santiago de Compostela 500 miles later is to be transported back through the looking glass.

The difference between these worlds is surreal.

To journey the Way of St. James is to understand life is a pilgrimage, the Camino an opportunity to experience an encapsulated version—of humanness in its purest form. The spiritual, our humanity, and the natural are more alive, vibrant, and present on this trail; perhaps in the quiet, the slowness and the calm, they can be felt more fully. The travel is enough to intimately feel the emotion, the beauty of everything and everyone encountered; the resulting richness of heart lingers long. Pilgrims gain within something akin to the fingerprints of God on this walk; we are deeply touched by places, events, and people—each reaching inside, often

affecting the soul. Most travelers stop walking in Santiago, but the pilgrim's journey doesn't end there. Nor is anything valuable left behind in the old city as we depart. The personal, the intimate, and the spiritual come back through the looking glass.

The fingerprints remain forever.

Back in the contemporary world we bring a greater trust and awareness to our Camino of life. It is easy to fall into old habits, the busyness of life again, and miss the yellow arrows that point the way. Deep within though, is a greater desire to live the present, love one day at a time, let go the past, and feel the journey fully. ♦

From *Camino de Santiago Fingerprints of God* by Paul Moylan  
([www.paulmoylan.com](http://www.paulmoylan.com))

### Haiku

By Karen Hypes  
London ON Canada

Why am I walking?  
Pilgrim's quest or wanderlust  
Time alone will tell



## Association News

### American Pilgrims Welcomes New Board Members



Cheryl Grasmoen



Bob Holm



Zita Macy



Mona Spargo

#### Cheryl Grasmoen

Cheryl walked the Camino from St. Jean Pied de Port to Santiago in 2007, returning to Spain in 2010 to serve as hospitalera in Bercianos del Real Camino. She has attended four Gatherings.

After practicing law for nearly 20 years, in 1995 she became one of the founding officers of a national community foundation based in Minneapolis.

She currently serves on the board of a U.S. charity that supports a hospital in Tanzania.

In addition to the Camino, her interests include gardening, cooking, string quartet, landscape painting, and scuba diving.

#### Bob Holm

Bob walked the Camino Francés with his wife in 2001. Then in 2010, he served as an hospitalero in Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino, where he met Rennie Archibald, a fellow hospitalero serving in neighboring Foncebadón. When they returned home, they got together and founded the Northern California Chapter of American Pilgrims.

As a member of the Board, Bob will work to encourage pilgrims to give back to the Camino by joining/renewing their memberships, serving as hospitaleros, and joining (or starting) local chapters where they can once again experience the camaraderie found on the Camino, and also mentor pilgrims-to-be.

Bob's photo was taken at the Tower of St. James in Paris, where, per the inscription, millions of pilgrims began their journey to Santiago de Compostela. Bob and his wife were in Paris to celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary.

#### Zita Macy

Zita served on the American Pilgrims Board in the organization's early days. In 1999, she walked from SJPP to Santiago and returned to the Camino in 2005 to walk and work as an hospitalera in Arrés on the Camino Aragonés. For some time, she has been contributing to American Pilgrims as the Association Manager, working with Membership, Chapters, the Gathering, *La Concha*, and Hospitalero Trainings. While working in residential real estate in the San Francisco Bay Area, she's looking forward to her next opportunity to experience the Camino again.

#### Mona Spargo

Mona was born, raised, and has spent her life hiking in Alaska. She works in Public Relations and Outreach for the Chugach National Forest. In 2010, she and her father celebrated his 70th birthday by walking the Camino Francés. ♦

## Jim Eychaner and Daniel De Kay Complete Board Terms

Two long-serving and beloved Board members, Daniel De Kay and Jim Eychaner, ended their Board terms at the end of 2011. Daniel served on the Board for six years and is best known for his leadership of the hospitalero program that has trained scores of American Pilgrim hospitaleros. Daniel's ready smile and welcoming personality make him the very model of an exemplary hospitalero.

As mentioned earlier in this issue, Jim served as Chair for the past three years, and the organization grew in many ways under his leadership. Recently retired from Washington State Government, this avid cyclist rode the entire Vía de la Plata this fall and has many other journeys planned.

Best wishes to Daniel and Jim as they pursue their other interests...and remain active in American Pilgrims. ♦



*Daniel De Kay*



*Jim Eychaner*

## International Networking



*Board members Carlos Mentley (l) and Cherie Pagett meet with counterparts from Canada and Spain at International Pilgrim Congress in Valencia, Spain.*

Last fall five Board members represented American Pilgrims on the Camino at international conferences in Valencia, Spain and Utrecht, the Netherlands. This laid the groundwork for future collaboration, and, in the case of Utrecht, collecting information on segments of the Camino de Santiago throughout Europe. We anticipate that the Presidents of the Japanese Association of Friends of the Camino de Santiago and the Spanish Federation of Associations of Friends of the Camino de Santiago will attend our Gathering. We have entered an exciting new stage in our organization's development! ♦

## 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.

Jenn Ambrose  
Roger Alden Anderson  
Annette Argall  
Richard O. Baldwin, Jr.  
Alli Delavan  
Celia Dollmeyer  
Mike Dunican  
Jim Eychaner

Tom Fulham  
Patricia Gushikuma  
Peg Rooney Hall  
Dayton Hypes  
Karen Hypes  
Esther Jantzen  
Kathy Kennerly  
Gene McCullough

Gregor McElvogue  
Paul Moylan  
Teresa O'Kane  
Cherie Pagett  
Charlotte Mitchell Smith  
Sharon Walton  
Jon Wood



## Welcome New Members!

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined American Pilgrims on the Camino from October 2011 through January 2012. We look forward to meeting you at future Gatherings and events.

- ◆Linda Aguilera
- ◆Barbara Anderson
- ◆Craig Andrews
- ◆Monica Armanino
- ◆Cheryl Arnold
- ◆Lynn Ashcraft-Yonashiro
- ◆Sandra Ayoub
- ◆Archie Batcheller
- ◆Patricia Beardsley
- ◆Carla Beasley
- ◆Marianne Becali
- ◆Tom Beck
- ◆John Bell
- ◆Alan Bernikoff
- ◆Carla Bitterling
- ◆Melissa Brown
- ◆Pennie Bucilla
- ◆Richard Burns
- ◆Angela & Diana Bustos
- ◆Francisco Campos
- ◆Tiffany Christopher
- ◆Eileen & Mike Ciluffo
- ◆Holly Cirri
- ◆Sara Cortez
- ◆Marilyn Crang
- ◆Linda & Charles Crowder
- ◆Raul Damas
- ◆Ari De Oliveira
- ◆Alli Delavan
- ◆Elisabeth Desmarais
- ◆Thomas & Carol Duffy
- ◆Rev. Jeffrey Edmunds
- ◆Tess Felix
- ◆Arlindo Marques Filho
- ◆Bonnie Folkes
- ◆Karen & William Froming
- ◆Susan Gallagher

- ◆Allan & Judy Garland
- ◆Kathryn Geier
- ◆James Grichar
- ◆Patricia Gushikuma
- ◆Jose Hanchi
- ◆Nancy Nee Hanifin
- ◆Georgia Harris
- ◆Paul Hayter
- ◆William Hecht
- ◆Marsha Hennig
- ◆Cathy Hill
- ◆George C Hines
- ◆Thomas Hoffman
- ◆Chuck & Deborah Hoover
- ◆David Jennings
- ◆Rachael Kenoyer
- ◆Sheila Kogan
- ◆Diane Lemay
- ◆Jessica & Susan Leonard
- ◆Dominic Limpin
- ◆E.T. & Pat Little
- ◆Carl Lockamy
- ◆Charles Lowery
- ◆Barbara Mahan
- ◆Jim Maloney
- ◆Melissa Mendiola
- ◆John Miaullis
- ◆Mark Minster
- ◆Jay Morey
- ◆Arlene Mourier
- ◆Paul Moylan
- ◆Jane O'Rourke
- ◆Esther Perkins
- ◆Linda & Dale Pittman
- ◆Linnea & Timothy Pittman
- ◆Laura Prato
- ◆Rita Preza

- ◆John & Katherine Pyron
- ◆Phillip & Judy Reilly
- ◆Gabriel & Ian Rhead
- ◆Graciela & Matthew Rhead
- ◆Roger Ridenour
- ◆Mary Rimshaw
- ◆Mary Kathleen Roach
- ◆Maria Rutland
- ◆Bert Schez
- ◆Joyce Sattler
- ◆Walt & Laura Scherer
- ◆Marcie & Elizabeth Scherer
- ◆Janet Schlaifer
- ◆Katharyn Schwartz
- ◆Gwynne Schwartz
- ◆Lisa Signori
- ◆Gonzalo Silverio
- ◆Tracy Sites
- ◆Elizabeth Smisek
- ◆Louise Stewart-Spagnuolo
- ◆Jim Stipe
- ◆Brooke Taylor
- ◆Mark Terhune
- ◆Betsy-Ann Toffler
- ◆David Toner
- ◆Marian Tully
- ◆Francesc & Alan Verdu
- ◆Nate & Faith Walter
- ◆Christina Way
- ◆Janet Welborn
- ◆William D Williams III
- ◆Kathryn Winterle-Ilo
- ◆Edward Wittkofski
- ◆Kelly Zavotka



*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 April 30, 2012. 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,  
Heather Knight, Zita Macy*

---

## Board of Directors 2012

Carlos Mentley, Chair  
Cherie Pagett, Vice Chair  
Annette Argall, Secretary  
Ann Howley, Treasurer  
Bill Edwards  
Cheryl Grasmoen

Robert Holm  
Marlena Lambert  
Zita Macy  
Herbert Medina  
Mona Spargo

[membership@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:membership@americanpilgrims.com)  
[newsletter@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:newsletter@americanpilgrims.com)  
[grants@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:grants@americanpilgrims.com)  
[volunteer@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:volunteer@americanpilgrims.com)  
[hospitaleros@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:hospitaleros@americanpilgrims.com)  
[gatherings@americanpilgrims.com](mailto:gatherings@americanpilgrims.com)

Cherie, Annette & Zita  
Cherie, Annette & Zita  
Herbert  
Marlena  
Marlena  
Carlos & Marlena

## Other Key Personnel

Association Manager: Zita Macy  
Credentials Distribution: Rosann McCullough

Webmaster: Gene McCullough

---

American Pilgrims on the Camino  
1514 Channing Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
Fax: 650-989-4057  
[www.americanpilgrims.com](http://www.americanpilgrims.com)

American Pilgrims on the Camino is registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.