



LA CONCHA

Newsletter of American Pilgrims on the Camino

www.americampilgrims.com

Spring 2013

Gathering 2013-Santa Barbara California

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Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

This is truly an exciting time for American Pilgrims on the Camino. National membership, new chapters, volunteer hospitaleros, participants on the Facebook page, all are at record high numbers. The same is true for the numbers of pilgrims from the United States walking the many Ways of Saint James in Europe. The pilgrimage business is booming.

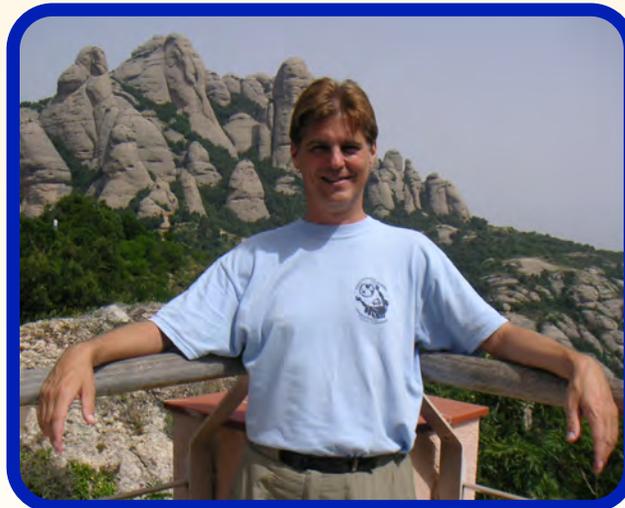
This might be the moment to ask ourselves about the “business” of pilgrimage. I recently attended a conference in Santiago about Christian Hospitality on the Camino. One of the issues that lay just beneath the surface of many conference papers and discussions was the tension between pilgrimage and tourism. There are many areas in which the difference between the two seems to disappear. Even a definition offered by the Archdiocese of Santiago is ultimately ambiguous: “Pilgrimage is a time set apart from normal everyday life, in which people travel to a holy place.” This description can fit the tourist who visits Graceland just as well as the pilgrim who visits Mecca during the Hajj.

Traditionally, the difference between pilgrimage and tourism resides in the traveler’s intent. Pilgrimage is undertaken as a quest

or act of devotion. At first glance, this distinction might seem to resolve the matter. But it is not that simple. How do we distinguish a visitor to Santiago on a genuine quest for spiritual renewal from one lost in admiration of Maestro Mateo’s Pórtico de la Gloria, or another contemplating the tomb of Saint James?

Perhaps it is more useful to approach this issue according to the visit’s effect on the visitor. To what degree are you affected by your journey, especially after returning home? If we adopt this way of looking at things, there is nothing to be decided or distinguished during the journey: everything has the potential to change. Can I begin my Camino as a pilgrim and end it as a tourist? Yes. Can I leave Le Puy a tourist and arrive in Santiago a pilgrim? Of course.

Funny where this leaves us. It does not matter how you make your journey: walking with a backpack, walking with car support, cycling, on horseback, on a tour, by bus, by car. It does not matter where you begin or where you end your journey. It does not matter if you receive the Compostela. What does matter? That you are affected, renewed, even transformed by your pilgrimage. And it seems to me, that is exactly the way it should be. ♦



Carlos, whether tourist or pilgrim, clearly happy to be where he is!

*i Ultraia!
Carlos Mentley
Chair*

According to the Chinese Philosopher Lao-Tzu,
*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
 So begins the Camino.*

Gathering 2013—Wrap-up

In March, 150 seasoned and aspiring pilgrims met in Santa Barbara for the Annual Gathering, *The Hidden Life of the Camino*. The weather was beautiful and the company animated and welcoming.

The weekend began with a lively reception, followed by the inspirational music of the medieval and early Renaissance group Ciaramella. Over the next two days, we discovered little known treasures – from monasteries, festivals, towns, and local food specialties to birds, geology, and other secrets of our beloved Camino – and learned practical first-aid and packing tips as well as considered the spiritual side of the journey.

We were fortunate to have Gerard Z.M. Zegers from the Amis de St. Jacques de Compostelle dans le Gers in southern France tell us about his region, through which the Camino passes, and to treat us to one of the region's best-known products, Armagnac.

It was obvious that pilgrims love a story, as raconteurs, poets, singers, musicians, and others entertained the group during the 5X5 Open Mike on Friday and Camino Cabaret Saturday evening. Much conversation and socializing between sessions, at meals, and into the night saw old friendships rekindled and new ones formed. ♦



Hospitalero Training

Hospitalero Training precedes the Gathering, and this year was no exception. Veteran trainers Daniel De Kay, Francisco Chacon, and Jeanette Chacon trained 22 new American Pilgrims hospitaleros, several of whom already have assignments to serve in 2013. Two new trainers, Annette Argall and Cheryl Grasmoen, joined the training team. Congratulations to all! ♦



Shell Ceremony

In what has become a tradition at the Annual Gathering, more than 30 pilgrims preparing to make their first Camino received scallop shells and a blessing in the emotionally moving Shell Ceremony. Father Mario Prietto, S.J., himself a veteran of the Camino, and Board member Cherie Pagett presented scallop shells to new pilgrims. Returning pilgrims who were on the Camino since the last Gathering were also acknowledged and welcomed back. ♦



*Gathering Photos by Lynn Talbot, Blacksburg VA, Annette Argall, Baltimore MD
Bill Edwards, Mattituck NY, & Marlena Lambert, Salt Lake City UT*

Amigos Program

By Cherie Pagett, Alexandria VA

Our first Amigo has just finished serving in Santiago and will be followed by 21 additional American Pilgrims Amigos over the coming six months.

After four days on the job, Cherie Pagett reported that the combination of greeting each pilgrim as he or she arrives, chatting with and hearing the stories of as many as language permits, and living in a delightful apartment a fifteen-minute cardio workout from the Pilgrims' Office is exhilarating beyond words.

The apartment is provided by the Amigos Welcome Service, of which

American Pilgrims on the Camino is a contributing partner. It is furnished and includes basic staples.

John Rafferty, program coordinator, provides ample training, introductions around Santiago, and round-the-clock support.

The Amigos season runs from May through October. If you didn't apply this year, be certain to consider doing so for next year. Serving as an Amigo is a unique and fulfilling opportunity to give back to the Camino.

For further information, contact: amigos@americanpilgrims.com. ♦



Meet us in St. Louis

FIERCE LANDSCAPES



THE INNER AND OUTER CAMINO EXPERIENCE

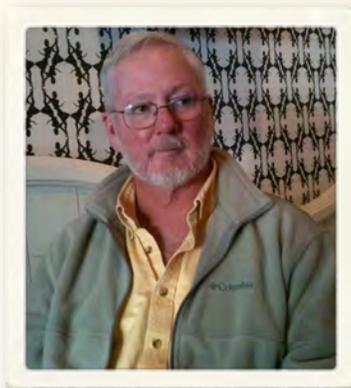
GATHERING OF PILGRIMS
 APRIL 3-6, 2014
OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS
 NATIONAL SHRINE
 ST. LOUIS, MO



THE EFFECT OF TERRAIN ON SPIRITUAL IMAGINATION • PERILS FACING THE MEDIEVAL PILGRIM • **THE FIERCE LANDSCAPE OF THE SPANISH ECONOMY** • THE HEALING NATURE OF WILD PLACES • **CAMINO PRIMITIVO – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW** • THE FAITH LANDSCAPE – THE DEVOUT MEETS THE NONBELIEVER • **NEW PILGRIM Q & A, EQUIPMENT, FIRST AID, SHELL CEREMONY** • AND MUCH MORE!

Volunteer of the Year-Rennie Archibald

Pilgrim, hospitalero, chapter co-coordinator, pilgrim mentor. Over the past six years, Rennie Archibald has exemplified the best of all of these roles, and American Pilgrims honored him with its Volunteer of the Year award at the 2013 Gathering. As co-founder and co-coordinator of the Northern California Chapter, Rennie's contributions have helped the chapter



grow from 28 people in early 2011 to more than 250 today. Last year Rennie started the chapter's Blessing/Shell Ceremony for new pilgrims and a Welcome Home potluck where pilgrims and friends came together to celebrate and welcome home Northern California pilgrims who walked the Camino in 2012.

With his continued interest in helping pilgrims deal with post-Camino issues, Rennie has started a program in the chapter to help pilgrims who speak of being on "unsettled ground" after their Camino and having a hard time understanding how their recent Camino experience changed them. He also gave a presentation on the topic at this year's Gathering.

Rennie's interest in this subject started in 2008 in Santiago, where he worked with his friend Reverend Michael Barham for three weeks, running a program that welcomed peregrinos and provided them with a supportive environment to deal with post-Camino feelings.

He first walked the Camino Portugués in 2007 and then the Camino Francés in 2009. He served as an hospitalero in Foncebadón in 2010, 2011, and 2012, all three times as the only hospitalero. The last two times Rennie was on crutches the entire time! Rennie plans to return to Spain as an hospitalero again this year (without crutches, we hope).

Congratulations, Rennie, on this well-deserved award! ♦

Chapter News

The spirit of the Camino stays with us well beyond our return, and many of us miss the Camino camaraderie. Recognizing this, American Pilgrims members have formed 15 chapters across the nation, the three newest being the Chicago Area, South Florida, and New York City Chapters. If you would like to get together with fellow pilgrims during the year for a variety of adventures, visit our [Local Chapters](#) web page to see if there's a chapter near you. If there isn't and you would like to explore the possibility of forming one, contact our Chapter Liaison at chapters@americanpilgrims.com ♦

Old Pueblo

In February we held the first official meeting of the Old Pueblo Chapter. We decided unanimously to host monthly meetings, guest speakers and walks. We also held our first Scallop Shell Ceremony for four members who will



be leaving soon for their Camino. Veteran pilgrim members read the blessings and each new pilgrim received a scallop shell and a copy of the blessings to carry on their journey. We have held a hike and also had demonstrations of reflexology techniques to help alleviate the aches and pains of a long walk and packing light for the Camino. Meetings often end with a wine tasting – Spanish wines, of course! ♦

Arlene Mourier & Robert Velasco – Co-Coordinators

Atlanta Metropolitan Area

We are now up to 135 members! Our monthly hike was on Sunday, April 21 at Amicalola State Park. A picnic lunch next to the cool mountain stream that feeds the waterfall was used as motivation to get up the 697 stairs to the top. Survival Spanish courses have been offered by our very own Patty Smitherman. Camino veteran Tom Beck wrapped up the month with a presentation at the Atlanta REI. Previously, Tom has presented three of these very popular and well-attended presentations. Information on packing, communicating to those back home, and Camino survival skills have been presented to over 100 people and counting. Keep an eye on the Atlanta [webpage](#) for more exciting events coming up! ♦

Tom Beck & Karen Parsley – Co-Coordinators

Western North Carolina

Monthly and weekly events continue with a high level of interest and participation. We've identified over 50 participants who plan to be on the Camino this year, so we sometimes feel like a travel agency! Much in evidence, is the common bond felt by returning pilgrims, for whom the desire to share is a happy complement with the clamor for mentoring. A little reassurance and maybe a push convinces the fence-sitters, as the joy of sharing permeates our *tertulias*. ♦

Chris Slater & Gary Ross-Reynolds – Co-Coordinators

Boston

The Boston Chapter has quickly grown, with members representing the New England states and New York. The first event of 2013 was held at REI in Reading MA on March 4, with the co-coordinators presenting a workshop on equipment for the Camino. This workshop was so successful that REI staff indicated they would like the presentation again.

The second event was a "Walk and Talk" on March 24, with about 25 New England pilgrims doing a 3-mile hike through the Middlesex Fells Reservation. We also presented scallop shells gathered from the beaches where the original American pilgrims landed to several modern pilgrims who begin their Caminos this spring. See our [webpage](#) or request to be on the email list ♦



Meg Holmes & Nancy Nee Hanifin – Co-Coordinators

More Chapter News

Northern California

In March, Patricia Merrifield led a training hike through wildflowers in the beautiful Garland



Ranch Regional Park in Carmel Valley, and Lil D'Auria and Chris Chan organized a gear talk and two hikes in the Sacramento area. April also had Chris

leading a very successful eleven-mile hike in the beautiful Point Reyes National Seashore. The hike started with a steep climb and then continued through forests, meadows, chaparral, and open grass to the beach. After lunch overlooking the ocean, we returned to our starting point through beautiful buckeyes and Douglas firs. Visit our [webpage](#) and plan to join us at future events! ♦

Rennie Archibald & Bob Holm—Co-Coordinators

Texas Gulf Coast

The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter continues to grow. We had a great time hiking at the Houston Arboretum, then sharing a potluck supper, and we have plans for a hike in the Sam Houston National Forest in May. We are making plans for some fun events for the rest of the year. Three of our members attended the Gathering in Santa Barbara and came home with new friends and new ideas. Thank you, American Pilgrims, for a terrific Gathering! ♦

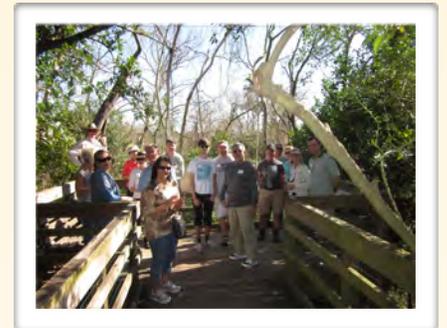


Jeff Stys & Mary Jane Miller—Co-Coordinators

Portlandia

On April 18, we were treated to a presentation by Linda Elliott, who recounted her 2012 Camino and stressed the importance of physical training and preparation for an injury-free trek. Linda's photo essay of familiar scenes took us all back to those beautiful hills, forests and yes, the beloved Meseta.

Our April walk took a group of 25 into Forest Park by way of the Leif Erickson trail, a wide path that allowed newcomers to walk with veteran pilgrims to ask questions and get the feel of walking the Camino. We gathered afterwards to enjoy refreshments and honor our newest pilgrims, Susan Treacy and Kathy Peterman, with a Pilgrim's Blessing and Shell Ceremony to send them on their way. ♦



Kathy Kennerly & John Pigott—Co-Coordinators

Colorado Front Range

The Colorado Front Range Chapter was established this past February. We consider our center of gravity – if you will – to be Denver and Boulder but we have peregrinos on our e-mail list from Ft. Collins to the north and Colorado Springs to the south. We immediately scheduled a walk on a section of one of Denver's outdoor jewels, the High Line Canal, for May. So naturally that is "el Camino del Canal de High Line!" Following the lead of several other chapters, we organized a shell ceremony for the end of April. This has proven to be very attractive, and we had 26 first-time peregrinos receiving scallop shells. ♦

Gene McCullough—Co-Coordinator

Following the Yellow Arrow

Younger Pilgrims on the Camino

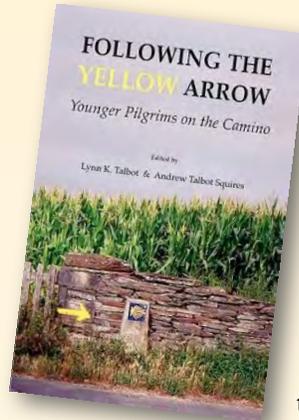
Reviewed by Stephen Revering, Flagstaff AZ

Following The Yellow Arrow: Younger Pilgrims on the Camino, edited by Lynn K. Talbot and Andrew Talbot Squires, is a gem of Camino writing, stories told by 21 young voices and bookended with an introduction and afterward by the editors, a mother and son who have walked the Camino together and separately. The essays contained therein are wide-ranging in style and content, though all are linked by the thread of placing one foot in front of the other to journey to Santiago de Compostela.

Following the Yellow Arrow: Younger Pilgrims on the Camino

Edited by Lynn K. Talbot and Andrew Talbot Squires
WingSpan Press, 2011.

The stories contain the nuts and bolts of the Camino: albergues, landscapes, shared meals with new friends, the sights, sounds and occasional smells of northern Spain. Some are straightforward descriptions of enthusiasm (or lack thereof), weather, trials, burdens, and lessons won. Others wax poetic and introspective, the inner journey eclipsing the necessary vehicle of the outer journey. They are peppered with colorful



companions and meaningful exchanges. For some of the authors, the people discovered and friendships made en route *are* the route. Regardless of the company they keep while winding their way westward, they do walk,

and the grueling physical nature of their undertaking is unavoidable. Apparently, youth does not guarantee a pilgrimage without tendonitis, sore muscles, or blisters.

These are stories of adventure, of discovery, of redemption. To walk the Camino de Santiago as a younger adult does not mean to walk it as a wide-eyed blank slate. The world as it is understood at the onset of walking is transformed by the time they reach their destination – but this happens to most pilgrims, regardless of age. The particular lens provided by youthful eyes allows for a perspective that is uncontrived in its expression of underlying emotion and refreshing in its outlook at the beginning of a lifetime of possible adventures. It is a joy to read. *Following The Yellow Arrow* will transport you back to your own Camino, or stoke your excitement for the walk across Spain that you have yet to take. ♦



*On the road to Cruz de Ferro after the muleteer villages
Photo by Carol Coughlin, Incline Village NV*

The Human Touch

By Louis Danielczyk, Grand Isle VT

I really don't know why I wanted to do the Camino, I had never been to Spain, I don't speak Spanish, and I'm certainly not very religious even though I was raised in a Roman Catholic household. Long before the movie *The Way* became popular, I had stumbled upon an article about the Camino de Santiago; and I knew it was something I wanted to do.

When I retired from teaching after 30 years, my colleagues asked what I planned to do in retirement. When I told them I wanted to do the Camino no one knew what I meant.

Some years passed, and when I turned 65, I met an old colleague who asked if I had done the Camino yet. I said "No," then I realized it was time. A month later, I was on a plane to Madrid. My wife and family knew it was something I wanted – and needed – to do.

My Camino was full of daily encounters with total strangers and images that touched me in so many ways. At an intersection in Pamplona, an old man saw the scallop shell on my backpack and tapped me on the shoulder. "Camino?" he asked. I

said "Sí," and he pointed me in the other direction. I was going the wrong way!

One hot day, I was resting by the town water fountain and began talking with a man who said he was 80 years old. When we got up he headed in the opposite direction. I suggested he was going the wrong way. He told me he had already walked to Santiago and was now heading back to St. Jean Pied de Port where he started - this was his third Camino. I was often impressed by how sacred the Camino seemed to pilgrims from around the world, especially to Spaniards.

Throughout my Camino I took photos; then, during relaxing evenings in the albergues, I emailed them to my family. My oldest daughter Emily, a professional designer, recognized the unique quality of these photos and surprised me with a series of personalized greeting cards and stationary bearing my Camino images. These cards are precious to me. Now, when I write a short note I'm transported back to the Camino and all the wonderful people who touched me along the way.

Adiós, qué tenga un buen día. ¡Buen Camino! ♦

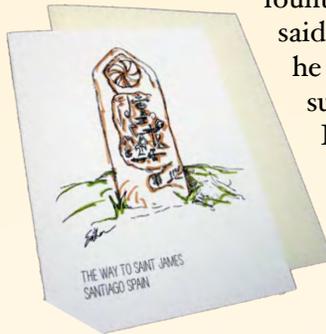
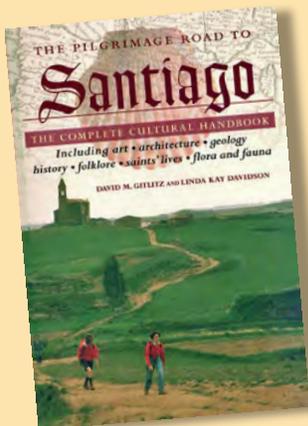


Photo by Emily Danielczyk

Tip Board

Suggestions from and for pilgrims
Please send us yours



The classic guidebook *The Pilgrimage Road to Santiago: The Complete Cultural Handbook* is now available as an e-book, making it available for an electronic tablet and some phones. Although its primary subject matter is the history of each area and its art and architecture, it also covers geology, flora & fauna and provides useful reference guides to the saints, a historic timeline, and an informative "Arts of the Road" guide to architectural styles.

David M. Gitlitz & Linda Kay Davidson
The Pilgrimage Road to Santiago: The Complete Cultural Handbook

St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Submitted by Bill Edwards, Mattituck NY

To Be A Mac-Pilgrim

By Hugh Lockhart, Secretary, Way of St. Andrew's, Scotland

Tartan, yes, golf, yes, but pilgrimage...in Scotland? The Spaniard and veteran of the Camino looked at me incredulously.

I was not altogether surprised. Most people recognize Scotland's flag, the white cross on blue background and how it is associated with the martyrdom of St. Andrew. They may also know how St. Andrew became the patron saint of Scotland by a miraculous appearance during a crucial moment in a battle. But it is unlikely that they will know that the first relics of the apostle were smuggled to Scotland around the 4th century A.D. and that St. Andrews flourished as a major place of pilgrimage from the 10th century for 500 years until the Reformation. Thousands of pilgrims arrived by land and sea to worship at the shrine of St. Andrew and to parade through the giant cathedral complex dominated by one of the largest buildings in Europe.

Today, pilgrims can still wander around the massive ruins of ornamented walls and gaunt towers and only imagine what it must have been like in its thronging heyday — before going for a round of golf, a swim in the sea, or sitting around in the local pubs sampling the beer and seafood.

For many pilgrims however, it is the journey, not the destination that matters, the day-by-day trudge, the changing and often dramatic landscapes, the casual friendships, and greeting the unexpected. The Little Camino, already so nicknamed, provides all that. Already there are three mapped routes; the longest, from the holy isle of Iona to St. Andrews, is nearly 200 miles, and

the shortest, from Edinburgh to famous Rosslyn Chapel is a mere 10 miles. And, yes, it does still matter, pilgrims can feel safe even on their own,

language is not a problem, and there is good public transport and an efficient health service. Competition is good, friendly competition is better, and the decision to revive the pilgrimage to St. Andrews is a mark of respect for the hard work and faith that has made the Camino to Santiago famous. Now, the Little Camino beckons you to Scotland, whether you are an experienced pilgrim wanting something new, or a novice thinking to test the water. Visit our website or Facebook page. One day we

look forward to welcoming you as a “Mac-Pilgrim.”
<http://www.thewayofstandrews.com> ♦



Pilgrims on the Little Camino south of Edinburgh



Cathedral, St. Andrews

¡Buen Provecho!

This recipe takes a page from the American Pilgrims hospitaleros – literally. As part of their training, hospitalero trainees receive a booklet of recipes to rely on in case cooking a meal is a requirement in the albergue where they serve. Zita Macy served as an hospitalera in Arrés, and her recipe for simple lentil soup is one that is reasonably quick to prepare, has ingredients that are easy to have on hand, and is amazingly stretchable when the four pilgrims for dinner suddenly turns to 20 an hour before dinner is served. Zita advises to always keep an extra bag or two of lentils in the cupboard – good advice at home too.

From the Kitchen of Zita Macy, Palo Alto CA

Simple Lentil Soup

Onions – chopped	Carrots – chopped into rounds
Celery – chopped	Garlic – chopped or crushed
Butter or olive oil	Lentils
Salt and pepper	Herbs: thyme and bay leaf, if available

- Add one part lentils to 4-6 parts water in a large pot. Simmer on low-medium heat for approximately one hour, until lentils become soft but do not fall apart.
- Sauté onions and garlic in butter or oil until just translucent and add to the lentils. Add chopped celery and carrots and simmer the soup for 20-30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Herbs such as dried thyme or bay leaf are also welcome.
- If you have leftover sausage, chorizo, or a ham bone, add to the lentils while they are cooking. If the consistency becomes thicker and your lentil soup becomes a lentil stew, you can serve it over rice, which makes a hearty, filling meal for hungry pilgrims or unexpected guests at your home.



Hospitalero trainee Ron Gonzalez tries his hand at the simple lentil soup recipe.

We should look for
someone to eat and drink
with before looking for
something to eat and
drink.

~ Epicurus

The Old Man and the Saint

By John Barrett, Oak Park IL

It was the feast day of the town saint, Saint Telmo, so I sat in the square in Frómista and watched the preparatory activities for the festival. Two firemen, one young and one old, arrived with a large fire truck to block off the streets leading into the main square. The young fireman would position a yellow plastic barrier in the center of the street and then the old man would come and move it - maybe an inch, certainly not enough to make a difference - yelling abuse at the young man as if he had committed a huge blunder. Everything the younger man, who was doing all the work, did was criticized in a loud and strident manner by the older one.

I watched this scene repeat itself at each of the five streets that lead into the square, thinking that this was a prime example of the abuse of power. The older man, with seniority in years and rank, screamed at the uncomplaining younger one, who was waiting for the day when the old man would be



The statue of Saint Telmo

gone and when he in turn would have the power to order others around. It was the timeworn story of the old abusing their power and the young impatiently waiting to obtain

and abuse it in their turn. And all of this to honor their saint? There was no saint here.

As the final barrier was placed, the younger fireman was now very close to me, and as he positioned the barrier a few feet away, still under the unceasing torrent of verbal abuse, he suddenly looked up and caught my eye watching him. He gave me a great big smile and slowly winked at me with an infinitesimal nod of his head towards the old man. All of a sudden, I understood!

Far quicker than I, the young man had understood that one day we may all be in the old man's situation, recounting stories of when we were young, we used to do the job that now rests in younger hands. We can only hope that we, too, will have someone who will allow us to tell our worn stories and fight our old wars and tell our stale jokes over and over again. To treat us with the same dignity that the young firefighter showed to the old. There was a saint here after all. ♦

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. ♦

- ♦ Annette Argall
- ♦ John Barrett
- ♦ Bronwyn Browne
- ♦ Tisha Cazal
- ♦ Carol Coughlin
- ♦ Emily Danielczyk
- ♦ Louis Danielczyk
- ♦ Daniel De Kay

- ♦ Mike Dunican
- ♦ Bill Edwards
- ♦ Peg Hall
- ♦ Russ Hall
- ♦ Robert Hodum
- ♦ Marlena Lambert
- ♦ Hugh Lockhart
- ♦ Zita Macy

- ♦ Mike Metras
- ♦ Matthew Nothelfer
- ♦ Cherie Pagett
- ♦ Stephen Revering
- ♦ Lynn Talbot
- ♦ Tom Weiss
- ♦ Alicia Wszakali

Camino Signs

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



*Even the sheep know what a yellow arrow means. Near A Parrocha 3 km east of Portomarín.
Photo by Mike Dunican, Lake Stevens WA*



*Don't pick up the flowers
Photo by Bronwyn Browne, Houston TX*



*Stone arrow sighted on the steep walk out of
Villafranca del Bierzo
Photo by Tisha Cazel, Flagstaff AZ*

God's Hotel

Reviewed by Daniel De Kay, Sebastopol CA

Victoria Sweet is a pilgrim and medical doctor. In her thoroughly enjoyable book she shares personal stories about her patients and fellow staff members at San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital, one America's last remaining alms houses.

God's Hotel

By Victoria Sweet

Riverhead Books, New York, 2012

Laguna Honda exists in the tradition of the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris, which cared for the sick poor during the Middle Ages. It is in the tradition of the Hôtel-Dieu that pilgrims were originally cared for as they journeyed the Camino de Santiago, a practice still followed today by volunteer hospitaleros. *God's Hotel* is the story of those who live on doorsteps, who sleep under cardboard, and those who care for them. It is the story of their illnesses, their thoughts, their loves and losses, and the daily tribulations that make up their lives.

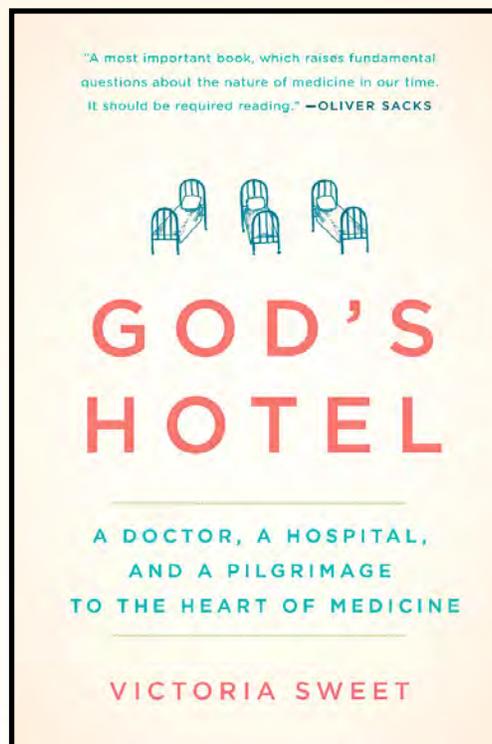
What's the Camino connection? Dr. Sweet holds a Ph.D. in medieval studies and has walked from Le Puy to Santiago. She studied the works of Hildegard von Bingen, known for her musical compositions and as a well-regarded medical practitioner. Dr. Sweet chronicles her own use of Hildegard's medical philosophy as she treats San Francisco's indigent. She brings to her medical practice, and to her patients, the spiritual and personal benefits of the pilgrim experience.

Dr. Sweet writes: "It was cold; I was soaking wet, and Rosalind and I were singing to keep warm. There were mud, fields, and rain; and I was chilled to the bone. Yet I didn't want to be anywhere else than in that muddy field, or doing anything else than walking in the rain, or be anything else except chilled. I wanted to be just where I was because only by being where I was could I experience what I was experiencing. Which was pilgriming.

As I walked through that field, I thought about how much of my life I had spent trying to make sure I would never be in that place - out in the cold, homeless, and without shelter. I thought about my patients who lived on stoops, slept in doorways...and my relationships with my patients began to deepen...there was some new way in which I was appreciating them just for who they were."

"I discovered that a day at the hospital was like a day on pilgrimage. All one knew was that there would be a beginning and a middle and an end to the day; characters would appear - patients, nurses, deliverymen, doctors - with spiritual and moral messages, if I chose to decipher them."

I highly recommend this very readable book to all who have an interest in either the Camino, the Middle Ages, medicine, or any combination of the three. Dr. Sweet brings us the stories of many memorable characters, from her patients to the nurses and doctors who work alongside her, caring for people who are, like all of us, pilgrims through this life. ♦



Welcoming Pilgrims in Estella-leave your boots outside

By Mike Dunican, Lake Stevens WA

In March 2012, I attended Hospitalero training given by the Canadian Company of Pilgrims. Freshly “charged” from this class, I contacted the Spanish Federation in Logroño for a posting in the fall of 2012. In my application I indicated that I would be walking my second Camino the following June. Ana at the Federation suggested that I volunteer the first half of July after completing my walk. It was a great suggestion. The available postings included the parochial albergue of the beautiful Romanesque San Miguel church in Estella. I took this posting and changed my return flights and added two more flights to/ from Pamplona.

June gave me a great second Camino with days to spare in Santiago and Pamplona as I awaited my turn to serve at San Miguel. My co-host, José Antonio, met me in Pamplona on June 30 and our adventure began. José is a retired Spanish TV journalist who had hosted many times. He was a great mentor and a welcoming hospitalero. In our 15 days we provided a one-night home for 345 pilgrims from 28 countries, plus others just seeking water and a quick rest. Most were memorable,

including a Spaniard who had started in Santiago, walked to Rome, and was headed back to Santiago. He arrived on time to help barbecue at my “4th of July Fiesta.” had purchased a barbecue grill, food, and all the Budweiser I could find in Navarra for the event. I brought several U.S. flags to decorate the albergue. We had 31 that night for a dinner of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, salad, barbecued lamb and chorizo, fresh sangría, Coke, and Bud. Our guests included two U.S. pilgrims who gave the oracion in English and Spanish. A total of 33 U.S. pilgrims stayed with us during our 15 days.

Every morning we provided breakfast, got everyone out the door by 8 AM, and cleaned the place top to bottom. We then shopped for food and supplies and visited other alberques and Bodega Irache for wine. We opened every day at 1 PM, welcoming the day’s line-up with lemonade, fresh fruit, and peanuts. Early arrivals got to share in our luncheon feast. José tended to first-aid needs. Our only rule was to leave boots and walking sticks outside. It was fun and hard work at the same time and a great way to give back to the Camino. ♦

Get-Together in Gainesville

By Russ & Peg Hall, Gainesville FL

The informal pilgrim get-together on Saturday April 6, 2013 at Russ and Peg Hall’s home in Gainesville FL was a smashing success! The potluck dinner table groaned with goodies, including tortilla española and tarta de Santiago.

Of the 25 attendees, six have walked the Camino in previous years and 15 have tickets in hand to go this year, including three of the veterans. Six leave in April, six in May, and three in June. There were five who are still dreaming about when they can go, and two (including an 8-year-old) still trying to figure out why people want to walk across a whole country. The rest of us know the answer will come to them before long. ♦



Camino: The Journey to Santiago

By Alicia Wszekali & Matthew Notbelfer, San Diego CA

At the Annual Gathering of Pilgrims in Santa Barbara in March 2013, we were honored to screen the Camino documentary short: *Camino the Journey to Santiago*. It was the first time we showed our 15-minute film to a group of people who knew the Camino intimately or would soon learn of it personally.

Excited? Yes indeed! Nervous? Absolutely! This was our audience: past and future peregrinos. If they laughed, sighed, or smiled, we knew the movie could be deemed a success. Ultimately, we made this film for them. When the credits closed and we heard the applause, we sighed. We also smiled and perhaps even teared up a bit.

Thank you, American Pilgrims on the Camino Board of Directors, for your generosity in allowing us to screen our film at your Annual Gathering. It was humbling and exciting. Both of us, as directors of this project, have put in long, isolated hours to

make this short film a reality. Sharing our personal sentimental film with others who are very committed to the journey was inspiring.

It's inspiration that most pilgrims understand. Our goal was to quietly emulate the spirit and soul of the Camino pilgrimage. For many, that means a journey that helps release burdens. The walk thus becomes a story about the journey itself as all else tends to fall away. The journey often becomes one of self-reflection, an aspect of the pilgrimage that is the same for many pilgrims.

However, revelations are unique for every individual. Our film embraces that ideal. While the documentary short offers a casual glimpse into one pilgrim's experience, its main goal is to allow viewers to interpret what their own discovery might be. It's an impressionistic film that presents an introspective narrative of the journey.

The images and sounds of the adventure gradually unfold, revealing unique experiences. If you've traveled the Camino de Santiago, or if you plan to explore it in the near future, we hope our Camino short documentary will enlighten and encourage you. ♦



Pilgrims' Steps

By Robert Hodum, Port Jefferson NY



Pilgrims' peace of St. James
Swallows' flight unseen
In the light of a pale moon passing,
Let fall life's stones of blame, guilt
And years of disbelief

Along this road that pulls us forward.
Leave angry words, mistrust
And yearnings ill-conceived
In the shadows along the Way this eve.
And find pilgrims' peace in Santiago.

Written 7/25/2007

Inspired by Luis Pastor and Joao Alfonso

First published in *Pilgrims' Steps*© by Robert Hodum.

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American Front Door to Santiago

By Mike Metras, Santa Fe NM

Pilgrims of old walked to Santiago from their front door. Many in Europe still do, walking from France, Denmark, Italy, Poland, and farther. Petra, my wife, walked from her home in Germany. We almost never think of walking from our American homes.

We had told many that they could walk from home and then one day we said, "Let's stop talking about it and do it ourselves." We did, walking from our home in California to New York, flying to Lisbon, and walking on to Santiago. It took us 11 months to get to New York and another month and a half to walk from Lisbon to Santiago. We did it like the pilgrims of old—one step at a time from our front door.

Walking in America is surely different than walking the Camino Francés. Instead of interacting with fellow walkers along the path and in albergues, you interact with people on the street, in restaurants, and in campgrounds, hotels, motels,

and private homes where you stay. As we did, you will meet a very different America from the America you see on the evening news. You will meet friendly, curious, and generous

a boat across as part of the "walk." You can even take a container ship from the East Coast to Europe, sailing into Valencia, Spain, where you can continue your walk along the

Camino de Levante, a wonderful, well-supported route that is not as crowded as the Camino Francés. We have told you some of our story at the Gatherings in 2009 and this year. What we want to emphasize is that anyone can walk to Santiago from their home in America. You can do it all at once, as we did, or in pieces a few weeks at a time and stretch it into a long-term project—your "decade walking

to Santiago." Maybe you will arrive in time for the next Holy Year in 2021.

Petra Wolf and I walked from our home in Paso Robles CA to Jerusalem in 23 months starting in January 2009 and spent Christmas in Bethlehem in 2010. Our book *Encounters on the Road to Jerusalem* tells the story. ♦



Petra and Mike on their 23-month walk to Santiago.

Americans. You will discover that you are in a peaceful and safe land with so many ready to help you.

If you start in the West, you will walk on some main roads. But from the Great Plains east there are always side roads, canals, and so many bicycle paths. The Atlantic isn't a barrier when we accept flying or taking



*Shell Casts
Photo and casts by Tom
Weiss, Paso Robles CA*



Welcome, New Members!

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

- ♦ Terri Adams
- ♦ Edith Ahlers
- ♦ Rick Allison
- ♦ Isabelle Alonzo
- ♦ Robin Andersen
- ♦ Bill Armitage
- ♦ Tracy Aron
- ♦ Bill Artz
- ♦ Cherie Atkins
- ♦ Laura Austin
- ♦ Dominique Avila
- ♦ Bobbi Bader
- ♦ Roseann Bayer
- ♦ Blaine Beatty
- ♦ Lew Bechtol
- ♦ Jonathan Bengel
- ♦ Tim Berrong
- ♦ Darlene Boettler
- ♦ Angeles Borrego
- ♦ Fidel Borrego III
- ♦ Fidel Borrego Jr
- ♦ Pamela Boucher
- ♦ Pat & Sterling Bremner
- ♦ Christine Bugnitz
- ♦ Vanetta & Larry Burton
- ♦ Ryan Caglia
- ♦ Mary Carpenter
- ♦ Stephen & Susan Carroll
- ♦ Aurora & Joseph Castellano
- ♦ Joe Cleary
- ♦ Don & Nancy Cole
- ♦ Kathy Colobong
- ♦ Carl Cooke
- ♦ Elizabeth Cornell
- ♦ Frank & Carol Coughlin
- ♦ John Cronin
- ♦ Emma & Fred Crudder
- ♦ Mary Curran-Perkins
- ♦ Patrick & Cindy Day
- ♦ Hector de Ita
- ♦ Carol Delaney
- ♦ Nina Demushkina
- ♦ David DePhillips
- ♦ Anna & Betsy Dintaman
- ♦ Jennifer Dobbs
- ♦ Mike Donnelly
- ♦ Betsy Doyle White
- ♦ Rob Drozdowski
- ♦ Ken & Susan Duncan
- ♦ Tammy Early
- ♦ Joseph Earney
- ♦ Denny Ellerman
- ♦ Bob Fair
- ♦ Dan Elliott
- ♦ Dale Fairbanks
- ♦ Nicole Fisher
- ♦ Pamela Fletcher
- ♦ Beth Foote
- ♦ Carol Bower Foote
- ♦ Danielle & Jeremiah Fox
- ♦ Bill Fox
- ♦ Kathleen Frederickson
- ♦ Carina Fyr Miller
- ♦ Mark Golby
- ♦ Frank Goldsmith
- ♦ Kirsten Golly
- ♦ Michael & Linda Grant
- ♦ Patricia Green
- ♦ Guillermo Grenier
- ♦ Laurice Haney
- ♦ Martha Hardesty
- ♦ Thomas & Emmeline Hill
- ♦ Alden Hill
- ♦ Pembroke Hoffmier
- ♦ Patricia Ireland
- ♦ Cindy Keim
- ♦ Nisbet "Ken" Kendrick
- ♦ Aimee Kentner
- ♦ Thomas Kolwe
- ♦ James Lamkin
- ♦ Deborah Lamm
- ♦ David Landis
- ♦ Andy Lanier
- ♦ Connie Larson
- ♦ John & Joe Lauria
- ♦ Melissa & Brian Lawson
- ♦ John & June Leahy
- ♦ Davis Lee
- ♦ James & Angeles Lehmann
- ♦ Patric Lehouillier
- ♦ Sarah Linden
- ♦ Nanette Long
- ♦ Donna Looney
- ♦ Jose Luis Losada
- ♦ Trevor & Alice Loy
- ♦ Brook & Gabriel MacNamara
- ♦ Susan Mann
- ♦ Steve & Kate Martin
- ♦ Anne & Teak Martin
- ♦ Rick McAllister
- ♦ Amy McGoldrick
- ♦ Maggie McLaughlin
- ♦ Sharon McNally
- ♦ Mary Jane McShane
- ♦ Jerry & Patti Meras
- ♦ Zack & Matt Meras
- ♦ Bobbi Merwin
- ♦ Sandra Meyer
- ♦ Gayle & Leah Michael
- ♦ Ryan & Brooks Michael
- ♦ John & Lauren Miko
- ♦ Paul Miller
- ♦ Stephen Morrill
- ♦ John & Diane Moxness
- ♦ J. Daniel Moylan
- ♦ M. Elizabeth Moylan
- ♦ Michael J. Moylan
- ♦ Liza Mutis
- ♦ Bonnie Naradzay
- ♦ Susan Neal
- ♦ Niko Neel
- ♦ James Newman
- ♦ Eileen & Carolyn Nickel
- ♦ Virginia Oehmann
- ♦ Daniel & Vanna Organ
- ♦ Alexandra & Gerald Organ
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- ♦ Doug Perkins
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- ♦ Glenda Pustka
- ♦ Daniel & Colleen Quigley
- ♦ Carolyn & Kaitlyn Quigley
- ♦ Nina Randolph
- ♦ Toni Raymus
- ♦ Tina Reynolds
- ♦ Norman, Mary & David Roos
- ♦ Russell Rudeseal
- ♦ Michele Sabino
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- ♦ Taylor & Christina Walter
- ♦ Sarah Wolfe
- ♦ Jon Wood
- ♦ Alicia Wszelaki
- ♦ Chris & Laura Yavelow
- ♦ Rebecca Zambito
- ♦ J. Damian Zambrana

Association News

Grant Programs Now Open for Applications

The American Pilgrims Grant Program is open and receiving applications through the **June 15, 2013 deadline**. Every year since 2009, American Pilgrims on the Camino has made available its competitive grant program in the following categories:

- **Infrastructure.** These awards are typically made to albergues or other organizations that develop and improve facilities on the Camino in Spain. Maximum grant award is \$6,000.
- **Gathering, information, and encouragement.** These grants are made to organizations in North America that organize and hold regional events to inform people and promote the Camino de Santiago. Maximum grant award is \$4,000.
- **Michael Wyatt Hospitalero Service Grant Program.** These \$500 grants partially fund the travel of American Pilgrims members who travel from the U.S.

to Spain to volunteer as hospitaleros. These awards are made on a reimbursement basis. Additionally, American Pilgrims on the Camino offers these additional grants to which interested parties may apply. They are:

- **American Pilgrims Chapter Mini-Grant Program.** Chapters may apply for up to \$200 per year to help underwrite events or programming. Applications are allowed at any time.
- **Hospitalero Training Scholarship Program.** A limited number of scholarships are available for American Pilgrims members wishing to participate in one of the organization's hospitalero trainings. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and must be made no later than 60 days prior to the hospitalero training.

Guidelines and details about each of the above grant programs are available on the [American Pilgrims website](#). ♦

American Pilgrims on the Camino Turns Ten

In the late 1990s, a group of about 30 kindred spirits from across the country gathered at a private home in Williamsburg, Virginia to share their experiences from the Camino. The group grew and got together once a year for the next several years, and in 2003, was organized as a 501 (c) (3) organization and adopted the name American Pilgrims on the Camino. American Pilgrims has flourished. We are 1,100 members strong, in 47 states and five countries, with 15 local chapters to date. Happy Birthday to all of us! Now for cake! ♦

Happy Birthday
American Pilgrims
on the Camino!



Photo by Tisha Cazal,
Flagstaff AZ



The mission of American Pilgrims on the Camino is to foster the enduring tradition of the Camino by supporting its infrastructure, by gathering pilgrims together, and by providing information and encouragement to past and future pilgrims.

Do You Have Camino Impressions to Share?

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

So, please keep telling us, in **400 words or fewer**, about *your* Camino. Consider a photo, a poem, or a new found understanding of an idea – a pilgrim’s perspective. We have refined our guidelines, so please visit [Newsletter](#) on our website for suggestions and our new guidelines.

The submission deadline for the next issue is July 22, 2013. We welcome your questions, comments, and submissions at newsletter@americanpilgrims.com. You can also submit to the street address provided below.

iBuen Camino!
*Cherie Pagett, Annette Argall,
Zita Macy, & Mona Spargo*
Team La Concha

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