



LA CONCHA

Newsletter of American Pilgrims on the Camino

www.americanpilgrims.com

Winter 2014

Gathering 2014 - **Fierce Landscapes** Belleville, Illinois April 3-6



The outdoor altar and amphitheater at the [National Shrine Our Lady of the Snows](#), location of the 2014 Annual Gathering. Photos courtesy of OLS



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Throughout.*

2014 Annual
Gathering of Pilgrims
Deadline for [Registration](#)
March 15, 2014

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

The other day as I was searching through the piles of paper on my desk, I came across a copy of a short commencement address. I am not sure why it caught my eye at that moment, but it was the right moment. Maybe Santiago had something to do with it.

Written in spring of 2000 by former *New York Times* columnist and best-selling author Anna Quindlen, "A Short Guide to a Happy Life" is a brilliant speech. It leaves me thinking that even though she may not have known anything about the Camino de Santiago, she knew what motivates so many of us to make pilgrimage: "It is so easy to exist instead of live." And she knew the wonderful lesson that we discover when we walk: "I learned to love the journey, not the destination. I learned that it is not a dress rehearsal, and that today is the only guarantee you get. I learned to look at all the good in the world and to try to give some of it back because I believed in it... And I tried to do that, in part, by telling others what I had learned." This is exactly what the Camino and American Pilgrims are all about!

With those thoughts in mind, I would like to mention a couple of the things that are very good in our world:

- Our Facebook group has more than 2600 members who every day create a multitude of informative conversations.
- Jeff Stys, Michael Romo, and Michael Burriss have joined the Board of Directors. Welcome!
- American Pilgrims on the Camino now has more than 1375 members. Your dedication and generosity in the last year have made it possible for us to fund grants, form new

regional chapters, and train and place new hospitaleros.

- Last year, Mona Spargo and her team created a memorable Gathering at Santa Barbara. Thank you again.
- This year, Cheryl Grasmoen and her team are promising another smash hit Gathering in St. Louis. I can't wait for April to arrive!

Finally, a very special word of thanks to two individuals who over the course of the last six years have given so

freely of their time, talent, and treasure. Cherie Pagett and Herbert Medina played an essential role in making American Pilgrims the multifaceted, international service organization that it is today. So Cherie and Herbert, on behalf of the Board and the entire membership, I thank you. ♦



i ultra!
Carlos Mentley
Chair

Raffle Donations

If you have items that you would like to donate to the raffle or silent auction at the 2014 Annual Gathering, please contact: gatherings@americanpilgrims.com. Your donation may be tax deductible. ♦

Fierce Landscapes: The Inner & Outer Camino

By Cheryl Grasmoen, 2014 Gathering Chair, North Oaks MN



Last fall I had the privilege of serving as an Amigo in the Pilgrims' Office in Santiago. I was struck by how often pilgrims expressed concerns about returning to life after the Camino. Again and again I heard pilgrims say, "I wonder what life at home will be like now," or "I'm not the same person," or "how can I return to the same old life after this?"

The Camino changes us in ways that we can't always articulate or understand - only sense. The 2014 Gathering will offer a number of opportunities to explore the topic of personal change through pilgrimage.

Members asked us to get her to the Gathering and we did! **Ann Sieben**, known as The Winter Pilgrim, will kick off the Gathering with stories of her pilgrimages through the fiercest of landscapes. A former nuclear engineer turned full-time pilgrim, and now "pilgrim in residence" at Santuario de Chimayo, New Mexico, Ann has walked the Camino and hiked from Canterbury to Rome, crossing the Alps in winter. And she walked alone in the winter from Kiev to Patras, Greece through Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Romania, while following the path of St. Andrew, a distance of over 4,400 kilometers. She will share her philosophy of pilgrimage and faith in the kindness of strangers.

Known to many pilgrims as the author of *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*, **Dr. Belden C. Lane** will explore the Camino as a sacred place that, though often ordinary, is ritually set apart as extraordinary. Belden says that a sacred

place ultimately is not chosen, it chooses. And sacred place has a double impulse—taking us to another place so as finally to bring us home again.

Psychologist **Dr. Heather Warfield** returns from a teaching post in Australia to join us at the Gathering. Heather will bring focus to the psychological and therapeutic dimensions of pilgrimage by sharing her recent research about similarities amongst various pilgrimage journeys and suggestions about how the therapeutic benefits of pilgrimage can be continued after returning home. Heather will continue her research at the Gathering. You may be invited to participate!

Just as mid-afternoon cravings set in, pilgrim and cookbook author **Yosmar Martinez** will delight us with several of her favorite Camino sweets in a demonstration and tasting session where we'll learn to make *Gateau Basque*, *Peras al Vino de Rioja*, *Natillas*, and *Tarta de Santiago*.

For those of us interested in the Camino history, **Dr. Lynn Talbot** will be presenting for the first time her study of the Camino under Franco, who first used it as a propaganda tool for the regime, organizing "pilgrimages" for political and religious value. Lynn walked the Camino from St. Jean Pied de Port in the last years of the dictatorship and will share insights from that pilgrimage experience.

Dr. Sean Raleigh

will tell us about the medieval nuns at a monastery near Burgos who sang polyphonic music in spite of being forbidden to do so. Sean will demonstrate some of the remarkable results. And he'll be with us again at the Cabaret, sharing more of his talents.



Fierce Landscapes continued

Medieval scholar **Dr. Eloisa Palafox** will introduce us to three contemporary historical Camino novels by several of the most successful Spanish women writers. Eloisa will show how these novels focus on the Middle Ages with adventures that relate to our own 21st century interests and concerns.

Jumping from the Middle Ages to modern times, you'll enjoy the session on technology on the Camino! **Dr. Rob Nickerson** has spearheaded a survey of pilgrims to identify and assess the many devices and apps that are being used on the Camino. He will present his results at this session and provide an opportunity for more input.

Have you seen the award winning documentary *Walking the Camino: Six Ways to Santiago?* Now you can. Producer **Lydia B. Smith** will present the St. Louis premiere at the Gathering. We've heard



Annunciation Garden.



The Church of Our Lady of the Snows, where Shell ceremony will take place.

about its production at Gatherings since 2008. Now we'll see the results!

Back by popular demand, **Dr. Martha Stortz** and **Rennie Archibald** will offer a sequel to last year's highly acclaimed presentation on *Angels and Demons on the Camino* with an examination of how pilgrims can integrate spiritual lessons learned into their lives upon return. Time for small group discussion and sharing will be provided. This session will be followed by a silent pilgrimage through the grounds led by the spiritual director of Our Lady of the Snows National Shrine.

We won't be forgetting the old favorites – packing, first aid, the Shell Ceremony, Camino Cabaret and 5X5, music, great food and fun!

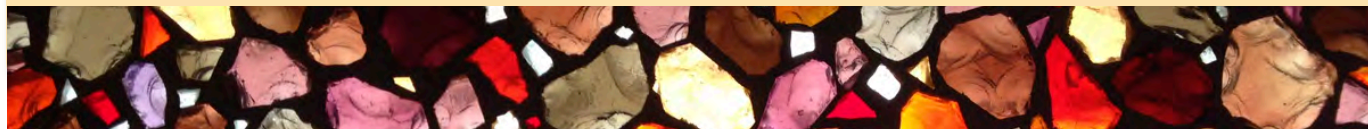
We pilgrims know the journey continues. Share your journey with us at the Gathering, April 3-6, 2014. Register now at www.americampilgrims.com. Join us. I promise you won't be disappointed. ♦

Gathering of American Pilgrims 2014–After Hours

5x5 Open Mike Night. Using 5 slides or props, storytellers have 5 minutes to beguile listeners with their Camino stories. But take note if you go over that limit you'll "get the hook" from the hard-hearted emcee!

An example of the beautiful stained glass you will find at OLS.

Camino Cabaret is onstage on Saturday night. Evocative of evenings at the albergue, when pilgrims share tales, song, and camaraderie, this is your chance to show us your talents. Share a pilgrim song, poem, or skit. Individuals as well as groups are encouraged to participate. ♦





Hospitalero News

Thank You, Lin Galea and Martha López!

For the past five years, Lin Galea and Martha López have faithfully produced *Hospitalero News* twice a year. They kept the American Pilgrims hospitalero community up to date on upcoming trainings, hospitalero assignments, and stories of hospitalero experiences through the popular “postcard” feature. We plan to continue these in upcoming editions of *La Concha*.

Lin and Martha, never a pair to sit idly, have many other projects in their lives right now. American Pilgrims thanks them for all they have done and wishes them all the best. ♦

Hospitalero Training to Take Place in April

Hospitalero Training will be held April 1-3 in Belleville IL before the Gathering. There are a few spaces remaining. Click [here](#) to register or for more information contact:

hospitalerotraining@americanpilgrims.com. ♦

Hospitalero News now part of La Concha

American Pilgrims hospitaleros have long enjoyed the articles and updates of *Hospitalero News*, the informative electronic newsletter for the community of hospitaleros. As of 2014, *Hospitalero News* content will be included as part of *La Concha* so that all pilgrims, including future hospitaleros, can also have a window into hospitalero experiences. ♦

Grants Available for Hospitaleros

While pilgrims want to give back to the Camino, finances sometimes get in the way. The [Hospitalero Training Scholarship Program](#) makes available scholarships to cover the cost of registering for hospitalero training. The [Michael Wyatt Hospitalero Service Grant Program](#), named for the late Reverend Michael Wyatt, former Chair of American Pilgrims on the Camino, provides partial travel reimbursement for hospitaleros for their travel to Spain to serve for two weeks at an albergue. A limited number of both types of grants are available, and applicants must demonstrate financial need. The [website](#) has more information on these programs and how to apply. ♦

Thank you, Karen!

Our apologies to Karen Hegyi, whose name was inadvertently omitted in the last issue of *Hospitalero News* from the list of hospitaleros who served during 2013. Karen volunteered at Ponferrada, May 14 through May 31. Thank you, Karen, for your service and for letting us know. ♦

Call for Hospitalero News Items

Hospitaleros, if you are volunteering this year, **please** let us know as soon as you get your assignment when and where you will be so we can include this information in the next issue. Any “postcards” from your experiences, hospitalero tips, and other news is also welcome. Send to newsletter@americanpilgrims.com. ♦

From the Point of View of this Hospitalero Voluntario

By Tom Friesen, London ON Canada

- Being an hospitalero expands the Camino experience. I serve as an hospitalero on the Camino in order to interact with pilgrims while helping them appreciate and connect to the local community.
- If we welcome pilgrims into our albergue home as guests, we are creating the same transition from tourist, hiker, bicyclist, or

adventurer to pilgrim that we ourselves experienced.

- All hospitaleros are good. Some are just a bit better than others.
- Hospitaleros are my brothers and sisters and often provide support and advice as needed.
- We are not in competition with private albergues.

- Providing a positive model by welcoming and treating pilgrims well, hospitaleros voluntarios improve the Camino experience for everyone.

- The tourist demands, the pilgrim accepts with gratitude.

- Remembering the positive pilgrims and putting thoughts of un-pilgrim-like behaviour aside is a best practice for happiness in the work.

- It is not for me to judge who is a “true” pilgrim.

- I can smile in all languages.

- *Donativo* does not mean free or even cheap.

- While the Camino is by turns a physical, mental, and spiritual experience, as a hospitalero, I can facilitate the transition to pilgrim by creating a focal living experience in the albergue. ♦



Dale Boost, hospitalero, on the porch of Foncebadón in the midst of a snow storm, prepares to sing the pilgrims down the road with Feliz Navidad.

Southern California Chapter

In mid-November the SoCal Chapter did an 8-mile Sycamore Canyon to the Sea hike, led by Marla Keese, for 24 pilgrims, including three new to the Camino. People brought credentials, maps, and books to share. From Newbury Park, we hiked down through Sycamore Canyon to Sycamore Cove on the beach where we feasted on yummy Spanish tapas, vino, and tarta de Santiago. Sycamore Canyon was hit hard during the Camarillo Springs fire, and it was great not only to be in nature sharing Camino stories but to see the rebirth of trees and plants in this recently devastated area. ♦

Marla Keese and Anita Baroldi – Co-Coordinator



Chapter News

To preserve the spirit and camaraderie of the Camino, American Pilgrims members have formed 20 chapters across the country, with chapters located from the Pacific Northwest to Florida, from New England to the desert Southwest, and many places in between. If you would like to get together with fellow pilgrims during the year for a variety of adventures, visit our [Local Chapters](#) webpage 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. ♦

Although each pilgrimage is individual, the Camino is a community, and American Pilgrims' local chapters provide a great service to the Camino community. Only four years after American Pilgrims on the Camino initiated its first local chapter, we now have 20 active chapters, with seven new chapters formed last year alone. Already this year, Northern Arizona, Tennessee and Kansas City have come on board, and four more regions are close to joining. You can look at the [interactive map on our website](#) to see where our current chapters are, then browse their pages to learn about their activities. In 2012 our chapters reached more than 1,500 people in their communities, and in 2013 that number grew to over 2500 people.

Chapters serve the Camino community through education and many forms of support. Chapters present dozens of slide shows and information sessions in libraries, outdoor gear stores, and other venues throughout the country. Each walk, potluck, and coffee meeting is a forum to teach new people about the Camino. Returned pilgrims have the opportunity to tell their stories and stay connected with a

group that understands how the Camino can change lives.

Chapters are taking a more active role in American Pilgrims' National Gatherings. The Chapter Breakfast and the Chapter Sharing Meeting will give chapter members the opportunity to meet and learn from one another. An information session will answer questions on how to begin a chapter. Pilgrims from Missouri and the Chicago Chapters will host receptions on Thursday and Friday evening. American Pilgrims would like to see more chapter involvement in the future, and we welcome suggestions (contact me at chapters@americanpilgrims.com) for venues for future Gatherings.

American Pilgrims assists chapters with programming expenses through its [Mini-grant Program](#). Chapters can request two grants per year for up to \$200 each. The application process is designed to be quick and simple. Grants have helped finance room rentals for St. James Day and other events, shell ceremonies, commemorative key chains and chapter patches.

When Becky Andrews and I became coordinators of the first chapter, I thought of it as a way

to reach out to new and experienced pilgrims. Now as American Pilgrims' Chapter Liaison, I want to reach out to new and experienced chapters. Please contact me at chapters@americanpilgrims.com if you are interested in forming a chapter in your area. ♦
Martha Crites, Chapter Liaison.



*Santiago,
HERE WE COME!*

*Photo by Mike Dunican,
Lake Stevens WA*



Xacobeo Noticias

New Director General:

Rafael Sánchez Bargiela was named Director General of the S.A. de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo in January. He

brings to the position his focus on geography and history, specializing in the medieval history of Galicia. We wish him every success and look forward to meeting him in the near future as we continue our long-term collaboration with the

Xacobeo. Visit their information-filled site at www.xacobeo.es

New albergue opens: The government of Galicia opened a new albergue in Betanzos last year, with plans for the next albergue opening in Carral on the Camino Inglés. The Xacobeo reports that more than 500 beds have been added in Galicia since 2010. ♦

¡ Amigos! Applications

Still hoping to volunteer this year in the Pilgrims' Office in Santiago? Given the **February 22** deadline, there remain only a few more days to request a packet from amigos@americanpilgrims.com and submit your application. Assignments are still available, primarily for the high volume months of June, July, and August. Don't miss this unique opportunity to give back to the Camino! ♦

The Numbers!

In 2013 American Pilgrims and U.S. peregrinos in general continued to increase their presence on the Camino, if not at the red hot pace of 2012. Compostelas issued to U.S. passport holders increased a whopping 43% over 2012; and we passed the 10,000 mark for the year in November! The total number of compostelas issued to all nationalities during 2013 (215,929) was up 12% over 2012. This is more in keeping with increases seen through the middle of the first decade of this century.

The number of credentials issued by American Pilgrims in 2013 was up 44% over 2012. More impressive perhaps is the raw number: 5,128 credentials processed and mailed.

Credential distributors Rosann McCullough and Kris Ashton are owed a *huge* debt of

gratitude for their work with this. Also due recognition and thanks are Ravi Rajan and Herbert Medina who spent untold hours devising an automated mechanism for transferring the submitted request data into an online spreadsheet. If you've waded this far through the minutiae, and would like to see the full picture, take a look at the [Statistics page](#) on the American Pilgrims' website.

Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez might have lit the torch for *The Way* a few years back, but it's safe to say that American Pilgrims is now running with it! ♦

Gene McCullough
American Pilgrims Webmaster
and Chief Number Cruncher

The Way of the Stars: Journeys on the Camino de Santiago

Reviewed by Paul Moses, Brooklyn NY

Canadian newspaperman Robert C. Sibley has written an excellent Camino memoir that is well worth reading for anyone who wants to re-live his or her own Camino experience or find out what it would be like.

The Way of the Stars: Journeys on the Camino de Santiago

By Robert C. Sibley

University of Virginia Press, 2012

Offering a wealth of carefully observed details about the land, wildlife, local people and his own aching body, Sibley explores the mysteries of the Camino in a clear, concise, unsentimental style. Well before he gets to Pamplona, you know he'll be thinking about Ernest Hemingway.

Like many a peregrino, Sibley is a religious skeptic who comes to realize that he is searching for God. "My pilgrimage became as much a journey across my psychic landscape as it was a journey across northern Spain," he writes. ". . . What had begun as an adventure, an escape from the everyday, had turned into an exploration of the spirit."



One of the mysteries of the Camino is how the psychic and physical journeys mingle. Sibley sets out both with insight, showing how they entwine without turning New Age on us. His road to Santiago is no road to Damascus; his arrival at the Cathedral of Santiago is rather a letdown. But as he plumbs the experience, Sibley finds

a lasting spiritual awareness in his Camino.

Sibley also does an excellent job of summarizing the expansive research on the Camino, dropping it in here and there in a conversational way, almost as if you were walking beside him on the trail.

The book is the fruit of a trip he took in 2000 for his newspaper, the *Ottawa Citizen*, for which he wrote a 50,000-word series of articles honored with an award from the Religion Newswriters Association for excellence in religion reporting. He re-frames that journey from the perspective of a second Camino trip he began with his son eight years later. ♦

Paul Moses is the author of *The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace* (Doubleday, 2009).

July 24, 2013



In late June, I started my pilgrimage alone, as did many of the peregrinos in this photograph. Some were in groups of two, maybe three, but as happens on the Camino, one became two, became four, became family. We'd see each other every day, then not for a week. But the word spread - meet in Santiago the night before the Feast of St. James for a family dinner and to watch the fireworks. Taken in the Albergue Seminario Menor in Santiago, this photo captures joy on our faces and excitement in our hearts as we prepare to head to the plaza to celebrate. Ironically, it is July 24*, and, as you can see from the clock, it is 9:18pm. Unbeknownst to us, 42 minutes earlier, there had been a horrific train crash just outside of Santiago, and everything would change as soon as we walked out the door.

The fireworks never began, and of course, the celebration was cancelled. Nonetheless, this remains the most memorable night of my life, and my love for these peregrinos is eternal. ♦ By Roxanne Morgan, Sacramento CA

*On July 24, 2013, at 8:41 PM, a high speed train, travelling from Madrid to Ferrol, crashed on a curve 2.5 miles outside of Santiago de Compostela. Of the 222 people on board, many from and/or travelling to Santiago, 79 died and some 140 were injured. It being the eve of the Feast of St. James, all of Santiago was readying great celebrations and glorious fireworks. Preparations halted abruptly as the news spread and joy turned to mourning. Our thoughts and prayers remain with those affected by this tragedy.

Camino de Levante

By Laurie Reynolds, Champaign IL

There are two kinds of “repeat offenders” on the Camino – those who return to the Camino Francés and those who are always looking for new Caminos. I’m in the second category, and in 2013, I chose the Camino de Levante, which stretches 1200 km from Valencia to Santiago. It has five of the six essential Camino ingredients: great waymarking, beautiful countryside, excellent guidebook, many lovely towns and cities, and



Approaching Toledo

decent pilgrim infrastructure. Only the pilgrims are missing!

To a Midwesterner, this Camino felt like home – open spaces, incomparable sunrises and sunsets, endless green fields. But much is different, with ancient castles, vineyards, stunning plazas mayores, monasteries and cloisters, Romanesque churches, Spanish Civil War bunkers, and 17th century mortar-less beehive huts. We walked through Don Quijote windmill land and visited Toledo, Ávila, and Zamora. We also spent many afternoons in places without much to do, eating a meal in the local restaurant, talking with people in the square, buying some food in the small grocery stores. We saw once again that what makes people happy are not fancy gadgets or luxuries but being part of a community and being loved.

We were surprised to find many excellent albergues. In fact, more than half of the stages have pilgrim-specific accommodation. Since I returned home in July, four more albergues have opened, including one in Castronuño, funded in part with an APOC grant. Until Zamora, we met only two other walkers and six cyclists. I was very lucky to meet two French pilgrims on Day Four. They became my companions all the way to Santiago. Locals told us that pilgrim traffic is steadily increasing, but the total numbers are still very low.

The Levante is mostly flat with rolling hills, but there are two wonderful mountain days before Ávila. In Zamora, the Levante joins the Vía de la Plata, and pilgrims can choose to go north to the Francés in Astorga, or veer west to the Sanabrés through Ourense.

I walked many stages of 30-35 km, but there were usually ways to split them into two short days. Approximately 5 long days (all under 38 km) are unavoidable, but they are all very flat. If those distances are within your comfort zone, and if you like solitude, this is a Camino filled with beauty, wonderful people, and a chance to visit some incredible parts of untouristed Spain. ♦



Typical Levante landscape



La Concha Crossword: Climbs

By Herbert A. Medina, Los Angeles CA

Solutions at www.americanpilgrims.com/crosswords

Introduction: Many of the clues and answers are related to the Camino. Clues *completely italicized* are either proper names in another language or common Spanish words/terms/abbreviations. Starred clues are related to the puzzle's title.

Across

- 1. Common *camino* sandal
- 5. An alternative to sleeping in an *albergue*
- 9. Green citrus
- 13. A *panadería* is likely to have one
- 14. Welcome site on the *meseta*
- 15. *European mil. alliance (reverse of Eng. name)*
- 16. Not stereo or *type of primate*
- 17. Sound of chichada or grasshopper
- 18. *Last word of the last one**
- 19. Similar to
- 20. Checkered toiletry bag
- 22. Not a brand you're likely sleeping on in an *albergue*
- 24. If the knee hurts a lot, the meniscus may be this

- 25. Two med. titles
- 28. *Int. Org. since 1945*
- 29. First three in Spanish as well
- 32. 2010, 2021 and 2027
- 36. Animal found in a Crosswalk?
- 38. May have been used in a *locutorio* in the past
- 39. Probably enough of a deg. to treat 42 down
- 40. Nowadays, most *camino* wear is made of a high-tech _____
- 41. *Tough Galicia welcome**
- 45. *Start of the year*
- 46. What plastic bags are at 5am
- 47. A pilgrim's oasis
- 49. Cousin of the sweet potato
- 50. What to do to an aching knee
- 53. Few carry these on the *camino* because of wt.
- 55. No *compostela* for doing the *camino* in these
- 56. Angry walking pilgrim?
- 61. Begins (as a TV show)
- 62. Dark clouds may signal one
- 63. So to speak
- 65. *I don't know* (OK, one can sniff out this clue in English as well)

1	2	3	4											
13					14						15			
16					17						18			
19					20					21				
22				23										
			25		26	27		28				29	30	31
32	33	34						35			36	37		
38											40			
41			42	43				44			45			
			46					47	48			49		
50	51	52						53			54			
55					56	57	58					59	60	
61					62						63			64
65					66						67			
68						69					70			

- 66. A *café con leche* is not enough to do this to hunger (with off)
- 67. ____ boy!
- 68. Some ultra marathon mtn. runs in CA
- 69. Dark clouds may be one
- 70. Literary at no time

Down

- 1. *Manjarin Templar (so he says)*
- 2. Bring on (as an emotion)
- 3. *Spanish 101 verb*
- 4. Barely a quasi attempt
- 5. What you may see with a spotty Internet conn.
- 6. Carmen has a famous one
- 7. *Worthiness plural*
- 8. *Forgiveness after Pamplona**
- 9. New England airport with direct flights to Madrid
- 10. Dancing ____ (1995 Tonight Show skit)
- 11. Wish this had *flechas*
- 12. Produced The Joshua Tree
- 14. U.S. doctors org.
- 21. *High point on the francés with "de"**
- 23. Not a specific one
- 26. *Port on southern French coast*
- 27. Common name in many languages

- 29. Samos has beautiful one
- 30. *District in Milan*
- 31. Bounce
- 32. Don't need one in a *clínica*
- 33. Banco Santander and BBVA would be reg. by it in the U.S.
- 34. Ungrammatical "lay"?
- 35. The *camino* is not this type of vac.
- 37. Your emp. has one
- 42. Most common *camino* malady
- 43. What old fruit likely did
- 44. What one may do to learn
- 48. What one still finds in some rooms in *albergues*
- 50. Your iPad and the cathedral in Santiago has many of these
- 51. Cathedral big shot?
- 52. Delete
- 54. Where most *peregrinos* come from
- 56. Eighteen year old males must reg. with it in the U.S.
- 57. *Common Namen on the camino*
- 58. What one may do to visit a town
- 59. *Wrong direction on the francés?*
- 60. Get off the bunk
- 64. No matter where you're going on the *meseta*, it always seems ____

The first crossword puzzle was published in December 1913. While some at the time thought crosswords would be a short-lived fad, *La Concha* crossword devotees can take comfort in knowing that this puzzle helps usher in the crossword's second century. Please contact the puzzle master at crosswords@americanpilgrims.com with your comments (too easy, too hard, just right) and whether you would like to see the crossword become a regular *La Concha* feature.

An Encounter with John Brierley

By Eric V. So, New York NY



Jade T., delighted by John Brierley en route to Ribadiso.

Surely the tall, lean man with graying hair, and a kindly face accentuated by thick, bushy eyebrows had heard the question countless times before. He must have anticipated it, thus in response to my friend Jade's inquiry, he smiled gently and answered, "Yes, I am John Brierley."

Our chance encounter with the famous author of the *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago* guidebooks occurred midway between Melide and Ribadiso on a brisk mid-October afternoon. Since the start of our Camino two days earlier in Sarria, Jade and I had overheard snatches of conversation among fellow pilgrims along the lines of "Do you know the author of those guidebooks that everyone seems to be carrying around? He and his wife just passed by ten minutes ago," usually followed by a general description of the couple (both tall and trim, with matching packs).

Initially, I dismissed this talk as a case of mistaken identity or wishful thinking. At the same time I took a harder look at the author's photo on my guidebook's inside cover (yes, I was one of the above-mentioned "everyone"), just in case.

And now, Jade and I, having overtaken a couple

matching their description, had decided to be bold and the inevitable question had been asked. John Brierley and his wife Ann were gracious in conversing with us, and indicated their hike was an annual ritual to research updates (e.g. new albergues) for both the Camino Francés and Camino Portugués guidebooks. John took great delight in knowing that while I focused on the practical matters outlined in each chapter, Jade concentrated on the internal reflections posed in the "Mystical Path" section. Ann burst out laughing when I jokingly asked how it felt being married to a rock star.

Moreover, the author peppered us with questions about our Camino (first timers), our route (Sarria to Santiago), how our experience was going so far (splendid), and so on. Our brief encounter ended when passing pilgrims vied for his attention, and we said our goodbyes and carried on.

Later, the skies opened up as we approached Ribadiso. The light drizzle continued into the night, and as Jade and I discussed the past few days' events over grilled octopus and wine, we agreed that meeting the Brierleys was undoubtedly one of the highlights of our Camino, and something that made our first-time pilgrimage even more special. ♦



Solitary pilgrim on foggy path

Mark and Mary Ann Thomas, Cincinnati OH

Camino Kismet

By Frank Stevens, Asbland NH

The Camino is full of surprises. Many remarkable events occur by chance, but some seem so fortunate or unlikely that a pilgrim may wonder if they are just luck, or something more. My wife



Kismet in Santiago. Author (second from left) with Ann Howley, Herbert Medina, and Wanda Ayo Alexander. Photos by Liz Stevens, Asbland NH

Liz and I arrived in St Jean Pied de Port last May, and were disappointed to learn the Route Napoléon had been closed for days due to bad weather. Late that evening I heard cheers as I walked past the Pilgrims' Office, and the news soon spread that the route was open. As we crossed the Pyrenees the next day, the snow resumed and the pass was closed again. Were we just lucky? Or were forces aligning to help us along?

A few days later, as we set out from Estella, a rainbow appeared ahead, a cause of much pointing and exclamations in many languages. The next morning, as we left Los Arcos, there was a second rainbow, a magnificent full arc framing the Camino before us. Mere coincidence? Or good omens for the journey ahead?

Perhaps the strangest set of surprises involved our fellow American Pilgrims. We knew only each other when we arrived at the 2013 Annual Gathering in Santa Barbara. That weekend, we made many new friends but did not expect to see them again soon. Just weeks later, west of Arzúa, we were overtaken on the Camino Francés by American Pilgrims Chair Carlos Mentley, who had merged onto our route from the Camino Primitivo.

The next day, as we arrived in the Praza do Obradoiro in Santiago, there beside us in the crowd were Ann Howley, Herbert Medina, and Wanda Ayo Alexander, fresh off the Camino Portugués. Minutes later, when we climbed the stairs to collect our compostelas, we found Kathy Kennerly working in the Pilgrims' Office. She had been one of the first to welcome us in Santa Barbara. What an amazing series of happy encounters.

We entered the cathedral early to get a good seat for the Pilgrims' Mass, greeted by the sight of the censer, the *botafumeiro*, swinging across the transept from the previous service. It swung over our heads a second time when our Mass ended. We thought we would be lucky to witness it once, but twice in one day? What were the odds? Whatever the explanation, we are certain of one thing: We cannot wait to return to the Camino and be surprised again. ♦



On the Camino

iBuen Provecho!

I simply love the food of Spain! I love the food on the Camino! And I love *sopa* – soup of any kind, from American chicken noodle to Vietnamese pho and all the other soups in between. But my all-time favorite is from Galicia, caldo gallego.

From the moment I step foot into Galicia until I return home to the States, I eat this soup every day. And once I return home, I make this soup, eat more, and freeze some for when I get a moment of nostalgia for the Camino and Galicia. ♦

From the Kitchen of Arlene Mourier, Tucson AZ

Caldo Gallego

- ½ pound dried white beans, soaked overnight and drained
 - 1 pound chicken thighs (bone in)
 - ½ pound smoked ham cut into ½ inch dice
 - 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
 - 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
 - 2 ½ quarts water
 - ½ pound Spanish Chorizo cut in ½ inch pieces
 - ¼ pound salt pork, chopped
 - 3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
 - Few shots of Tabasco
- Simmer all of the ingredients in a stockpot, covered for about 45 minutes or until the chicken is tender. Remove the chicken from the pot, debone, chop the meat and reserve.
 - Add to the pot:
 - ½ pound potatoes, peeled, quartered and sliced
 - ½ pound green cabbage, thinly sliced
 - 2-3 cups kale, thinly sliced
 - ½ pound turnips, peeled, quartered and sliced
 - Simmer, covered for 25 minutes; return the chicken and add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. ♦



Se Llama Nicole

By Philippe Lussier, Fairfield CA

My face suffers today
 Talks for my foot
 In Korean-English Nicole says
 I'm praying for you Pilgrim
 I extend my hand
 Clasp mine in hers

I thank her
 Tomorrow I feel better
 Who saw my face and prayed me well
 God?
 God in whom I do not believe
 Nicole se llama



Love Your Enemy

By Bill Sewall, Fairfield CA

At the end of my first day on the Camino, I walked into the albergue – a naive, confused, and exhausted pilgrim. That night, I washed my laundry and hung my clothes on the drying rack.

The next morning I retrieved my clothes from the drying rack only to find that my underpants were missing! I double checked and found a pair that were similar to mine still on the rack. It was obvious that someone had taken my underpants by mistake and left theirs behind.

I looked around the hostel for someone with the same build as me and saw a tall German man who looked like he might be the person who took my clothes. I walked up to him with the underpants in my hand, told him mine were missing from the drying rack and showed him the underpants I had found.

I timidly asked, “Are these yours?”

“Ya.”

Silence.

I was expecting a little more. Maybe, “So sorry. My mistake.

I’ll go get your underpants.” Nope. He just stood there looking at me.

Floundering and confused, I stuttered and asked, “Well, could I have my underpants back?”

“I’m wearing them.”

We stood looking at each other in silence. You have to understand that he was bigger than me with a steely air of self-assurance, and I was a newbie

Five minutes later as I was packing my bag, the German walked in and said, “You know, you got the better part of the bargain. I’ve had those underpants for a couple of years. They’ve climbed the Alps, walked across Italy and France and walked the Camino twice.” He smiled and left.

I never thought that underwear could have a history.

Forty-four days later, I was wearing his underpants as I walked into Santiago. I hoped I would run into the German in the plaza, he would ask for his underpants back, and I would reply “I’m wearing them.” But I never met the German again.

Ironically, the German gave me a great gift. As I walked the Camino I

thought about our

encounter, about self-confidence and about compassion – and from it came a [sermon](#) I gave to our church on “Loving Your Enemies.” ♦



The author walking on the Via de la Plata in early morning.

feeling smaller and smaller by the second.

I got the message. I looked at the underpants in my hand, looked back at the German, realized I could wear his underpants, said “Fine” and I walked back to my room.

Thoughts on Camino Apps

By David Jennings, Kings Beach CA

Do you hear me now? Hello? Hello?

I just completed the technology on the Camino survey, and now I worry that the whole point of the Camino in today's world is being replaced by progress. I realize that for many, walking the Camino is a holiday event, an extreme sports challenge, or weight loss, quit smoking, or other health benefit program. Whatever the motivation that is fine, but for the first thousand plus years, the Camino was a pilgrimage route. Yes, merchants, military, farmers, brigands, and others were using the route too, but pilgrims differed as they were on a spiritual journey following a route that would bring them to Santiago de Compostela and an answer to their prayers.

Simplicity, independence, and self-reliance were leading characteristics of the pilgrim. Naturally, he interacted with the other travelers and the locals, but for much of the way, he was left to his thoughts. I'm sure he had the same questions we have today. Who am I, and where do I fit in the overall scheme of things? Solitude and the commune with nature

give voice to the inner person.

Now, we are asked what technical instruments, what apps, do we need to make the pilgrimage? Who could ever imagine a pilgrim needing an app to find a restroom? Is there an app for living responsibly, for overcoming greed and ego?

Leaving behind modern day technology is part of going on a pilgrimage. It is a time away from today's distractions, a time to converse with our real selves, and to reacquaint ourselves with the basic values of life. A number of our society either don't know who they are or are trying to escape from themselves through drugs, alcohol, and technology. Some are more familiar with the Kardashians than with themselves.

The pilgrimage is all about you, the pilgrim. It is a hike over mountain and plain, with rain, snow, and sun, but the real journey is internal, a hike through the twists and turns of heart, brain, and soul. The journey is life, and the answer to our questions and prayers is not found in the Cathedral at the end, but along the Camino. ♦

Two Good-byes

The American Pilgrims on the Camino Board bids a reluctant farewell to Herbert Medina and Cherie Pagett, who completed their terms at the end of 2013. The commitment and contributions of these two extraordinary individuals over the past six years have been tremendous.

Herbert managed the Grants Program, chaired the Nominations Committee, and has been the go-to guy for all things technical, everything from operating sound systems to setting up Google docs. An experienced hospitalero, Herbert has walked or cycled several Caminos and often leads students and other groups. He does all these things while fulfilling his responsibilities as a university math professor.



Cherie has served as Vice Chair of the Board for most of her time on it. She co-chaired Membership and continues to be one of the *La Concha* editors. Her Spanish language fluency and love and knowledge of Spanish culture made her a natural for the role of External Relations representative, and she has been instrumental in developing a closer relationship for American Pilgrims with many other Camino organizations and leading American Pilgrims' involvement in the Amigos Program in Santiago. The former owner of a residential property management business, Cherie

looks forward to spending more time with her 5-year-old granddaughter and, of course, more travel in Spain.

Thank you, Herbert and Cherie, for all you have done. ♦

Unheard Melodies

By Genette Foster, Pasadena CA

As you pass through Portomarín, take a moment to look at the arch above the west entrance to the 12th century *Iglesia de San Juan*; it is filled with royal figures playing musical instruments. Similar carved figures of the 24 Elders of the Apocalypse are found on churches along the Pilgrimage Road in France and Spain. The Biblical basis for these depictions combines two passages from Revelation “Around the throne...I saw four and twenty elders sitting.” (Rev. 4:4) and “...having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of the saints” (Rev. 5:8). The Elders of Portomarín hold or play both string and wind instruments including a harp, a lute, a vertical fiddle (*fidula*) played with a bow, a recorder or vertical flute, and a double flute (V-shaped). Several pairs of Elders hold a large, figure-eight instrument across both of their laps: an *organistrum* (hurdy gurdy) played by turning a crank attached to a wheel inside the instrument which causes the strings to vibrate. I hope this description will inspire other peregrinos to look up; the afternoon sun lights up the west façade and brings the figures to life.

One of the most perfect representations of the 24 Elders with musical instruments is found on the *Pórtico de la Gloria* of Maestro Mateo at Santiago de Compostela. The instruments carved by Mateo constitute a veritable catalogue of medieval string

instruments. Plucked instruments include the harp, psaltery, and lute. Bowed instruments come in a variety of shapes including oval and figure eight. Some of these Elders hold vials of perfume but no wind instruments are depicted. Maestro Mateo placed an *organistrum* across the lap of two figures at the very center of the arch, above the head of Christ in Majesty.

Following the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the *Pórtico de la Gloria*, La Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza sponsored a project to construct playable musical instruments based on precise measurement of Maestro Mateo’s sculpted instruments. The inaugural concert on these instruments took place in December 1991, the culmination of a project first proposed in 1963 by Don Fernando Quiroga Palacios, Cardinal of Santiago.

Be sure to visit the splendid figure of King David holding a rebec and bow, on the left side of the *Fachada de las Praterías*, at the south entrance to the Cathedral of Santiago.

For more information about the musical instruments on the *Pórtico de la Gloria* and concert referenced above, consult the following websites, both of which are in Spanish:

<http://albertosolana.wordpress.com/2013/04/04/instrumentos-musicales-del-portico-de-la-gloria/>
http://www.educabarrie.org/sites/default/files/recurso_educativo/fich_guia/porticopcalo_copia.pdf ♦



West façade, *Iglesia de San Juan*.





Stillness

By Anna Marquardt, Lafayette LA

I was surprised when he suggested the Camino. I'm a great walker and was open to what the road could teach me. But it was off the road where I learned.

More John Wayne-style than Camino pilgrims, we lingered over breakfast in Sarria before setting out. Twelve hours later we staggered into Portomarín, dehydrated and exhausted by the forceful Spanish sun. Lesson learned, and we set out early the next morning. Day broke as we passed the Romanesque church of San Juan and walked into the Galician countryside.

The sun rose, we shed layers, and our pace fell out of sync. I hiked ahead, hungry to gulp in more of the road and to feel the accomplishment of arriving. More oppressed by the growing heat and blistered feet, my companion lagged far behind. Around noon, I waited for him to catch up. As I dozed under a tree, he hobbled up, red, sweating, and clearly in pain. He told me he could walk no more.

We flagged down one of the patrolling taxis that drove us to a hideous pink hotel along the N574 outside Palas de Rei. The place looked like defeat. But our cinderblock refuge did have a half tub, and after the manager artfully knocked the pipes a bit, there was even water for a foot soak.

We didn't talk for several hours. He sat in the tiny bathroom, caring for his feet, and I sat a few

feet away on a bed, looking blankly out the tiny window, waiting for a breeze. I was confused and frustrated. It was his idea to walk the Camino after all, and I spent most of my life trying to catch up to him. He was always at least ten steps ahead of me and not just literally. His career skyrocketed while I stayed home with the kids. He jet-setted the world while I comforted aging parents. He climbed the corporate ladder while I was chained to a high school classroom, encouraging others to fly. I was frustrated, this Camino adventure was another opportunity to move and here I was again, waiting. Immobile. Hot.

Although completely still, hot, and uncomfortable, I became acutely aware of where I was and what I was doing, of how I got there and how the road of my own life was leading me. In that heat and stillness my heart softened. I felt warmth for the experiences with my children, my parents, and my students. With that gratitude came feelings of warmth for the man with the blistered feet whose movement through life allowed stillness in my own.

He left the bathroom sheepishly. I asked him to sit down so I could dress his blisters.

Later, we sat at a plastic table in the parking lot. We looked across the highway at the road we would walk again, as we had a few *cervezas* and some lamb. We relaxed with the sun and sky, enjoying our stillness. ♦

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. ♦

- ♦ Martha Crites
- ♦ Mike Dunican
- ♦ Genette Foster
- ♦ Tom Friesen
- ♦ Cheryl Grasmoen
- ♦ David Jennings
- ♦ Philippe Lussier
- ♦ Anna Marquardt
- ♦ Gene McCullough
- ♦ Herbert Medina
- ♦ Roxanne Morgan
- ♦ Paul Moses
- ♦ Arlene Mourier
- ♦ Laurie Reynolds
- ♦ Bill Sewall
- ♦ Eric So
- ♦ Frank Stevens
- ♦ Liz Stevens
- ♦ Mark & Mary Ann Thomas

Jeff Stys, Michael Burriss, Michael Romo Join American Pilgrims Board

American Pilgrims on the Camino is excited to welcome Jeff Stys, Michael Burriss, and Michael Romo, to its Board of Directors! ♦



Jeff Stys

Jeff first walked the Camino in 2003 from León to Santiago—thinking that would be the end of it. He has returned almost every year since. He's walked most of the Via de la Plata and the Camino del Norte. His last time on the Camino was April 2012, when he walked from Somport on the Camino Aragonés to Finisterre. He and co-coordinator Mary Jane Miller formed a local chapter of American Pilgrims in Houston, Texas in 2011. Jeff has his own consulting practice specializing in non-profit strategic planning and organizational development. The American Pilgrims Board will tap into Jeff's professional expertise, as his Board responsibilities will include strategic planning and chapter development.



Michael Burriss

A professor of Spanish at Erskine College in South Carolina, Michael has recently returned from leading a group of students on a winter walk on the Camino Francés. Michael is a trained hospitalero and served as an Amigo last summer at the Pilgrims' Office in Santiago. When not teaching Spanish or walking the Camino, Michael can be found hiking or running, playing piano, traveling with his fiancée, playing with his two dachshunds, or riding his Harley across the country. Michael's Board responsibility will include marketing, communications and new media.



Michael Romo

Michael recently retired from the California Teachers Association after a career in Education as a teacher and union representative. His life-long love of history and Spain, which he inherited from his Cuban-born father, drove him to walk the entire Camino Francés from St. Jean Pied de Port to Santiago de Compostela last summer. His fluency in Spanish made his pilgrimage one that he'll never forget and one that he plans on repeating often. Michael will be one of two board members responsible for grants.

The best way to find yourself is in the
service of others. —Mahatma Gandhi



Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined American Pilgrims on the Camino from November 2013 through January of this year. We look forward to meeting all of you at future Gatherings and events. ♦

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ♦ Frances Abbott | ♦ Timothy & Katie Foster | ♦ Jay Larry | ♦ Jennifer Schuster |
| ♦ Dolly Anagnostis | ♦ Rosemary Fox | ♦ Henry Leeds | ♦ Randy Selig |
| ♦ Eugenia Araque | ♦ David French | ♦ Cheryl Lentz | ♦ Eric & Thomas Sheffer |
| ♦ Gale & Dave Armstrong | ♦ Charles Friedrichs | ♦ Bonita Macaro | ♦ Matthew Shepardson |
| ♦ June Augustina | ♦ Megan Friesen | ♦ Nancy & Martin Manley | ♦ Yanna (Jennifer) Shumaker |
| ♦ James Baldo | ♦ Gene Frogge | ♦ Frank Marrero | ♦ Susan & John Silverio |
| ♦ Barbara Barber | ♦ Elizabeth Fuller | ♦ Kathleen Martin | ♦ Rebecca Allen Smith |
| ♦ Marylea Battaglia | ♦ Jeannine Gaudet | ♦ Cheryl Martine | ♦ Sandra Smith |
| ♦ Patricia Bekken | ♦ Rory Gentry | ♦ David Martinez | ♦ Victor Sotomayor |
| ♦ Ora Ben Barak | ♦ Michele Golay | ♦ Mary Ruth Marwitz | ♦ Marge Sparks |
| ♦ Blythe Bennett | ♦ Rebecca Goldstein | ♦ Sally Maynard | ♦ Esther Steinberg |
| ♦ Teresa Benson | ♦ Henry Golobic | ♦ Richard Mayo | ♦ Michael Strayer |
| ♦ Craig Bernthal | ♦ Jonathan Gurney | ♦ Robert McKay | ♦ Deborah Strother |
| ♦ Johelen & Michael Biven | ♦ Carol Haney | ♦ Anthony McMahan | ♦ Justin Sukato |
| ♦ Sarah Blanton | ♦ Paulette & Stephen Hannah | ♦ Gilberto Medina | ♦ James & Roberta Sutton |
| ♦ Geri & Doug Boyer | ♦ Robert Harrison | ♦ Natasha Melichar | ♦ Danette Tama |
| ♦ Ken Branson | ♦ Joseph Herman | ♦ Jackie Michelini | ♦ E. Eilene Theilig |
| ♦ Larry Bridenbeck | ♦ Roy W Hill | ♦ Lynne Miller | ♦ Lindsey Thornton |
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| ♦ Bruce Colbert | ♦ Sherry & Dave Johnson | ♦ Penelope Novak | ♦ Jose Velasco |
| ♦ David Combs | ♦ Roger Joly | ♦ William & Yasmina Nye | ♦ Eileen Wall |
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| ♦ Nancy Dickinson | ♦ Robert Key | ♦ Thomas Raftery | ♦ Barbara Zang |
| ♦ Brenda Donroe | ♦ David Klekner | ♦ Beth Ramirez | ♦ Joseph & Agnes Zarcaro |
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| ♦ Martha Dysart | ♦ Karl & Sophia Koball | ♦ Elizabeth Rielley | ♦ Jennifer Zogg |
| ♦ Earle Ellis | ♦ Jenelle & Karra Koball | ♦ Mary Burton Riseley | |
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| ♦ Rosemary Feehan | ♦ Daniel Kurtz | ♦ Craig & Leanna Rozean | |
| | | ♦ Chad & Connor Rozean | |
| | | ♦ Lori Ryder | |
| | | ♦ Barbara Schultz | |



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 April 20, 2014. We welcome your questions, comments, and submissions at newsletter@americampilgrims.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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Zita
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Zita
Cheryl, Zita, & Mona
Annette & Cheryl

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