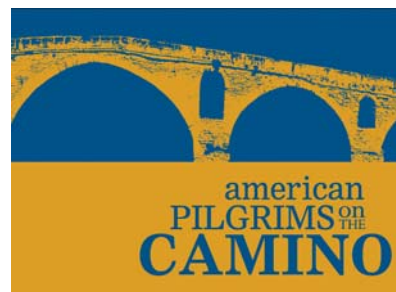


AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2007



Dear Fellow Pilgrims:

The new members of our board are all "on board" now. We had a stimulating and encouraging meeting in September. I want simply to tell you a bit about who they are and what their responsibilities will be for the work of American Pilgrims on the Camino.

Daniel DeKay is a veteran pilgrim and hospitalero. He has not only walked the Camino Frances many times, he has served as an hospitalero twice as well. He has had years of experience teaching outdoor safety and medical rescue. We have been fortunate to experience his expertise at workshops given at our Gatherings and Hospitalero Trainings. He will take on the organization of Hospitalero Training program provided by American Pilgrims on the Camino to our members.

Jim Eychaner covered the Camino on bicycle in 2004. He brings to the Board experience with the Washington Trails Association, recreation planning for the State of Washington, and just stepped off being president of the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners. He will be coordinating our communication-website and journal.

Nick Hayes has lived around the world, focusing on IT work and business strategies. He also has walked the Camino many times and is interested, given his international experience, in links with other Camino associations. He has been an active participant on the Santiagobis listserv, a resource for information and connection to the Camino world, since its beginnings. He will oversee our Camino Support committee and serve as Treasurer. During our March 2007 Gathering in Williamsburg, Nick held a session to explore options for Camino support that our organization can take on and carry out. Please look for the account of that "town hall meeting."

Carlos Mentley is a college professor who takes students on Camino walks each year during the January intersession, also walking on his own and serving as hospitalero at other times. He will serve as our Secretary, Chair of the By-Laws and Policies Committee, and support the work of the Membership and Communications Committees.

Mary Wallis joins us from Canada. She has both walked and biked the Camino since the 1990s, including portions of the Via de la Plata and Camino Portuguese. She has participated as a speaker at our gatherings in Toronto and Boulder and has authored a Camino book entitled "Among the Pilgrims". She will assist with our annual gatherings and will serve as the chair of the Nominating Committee, having participated in the nominations of the recently elected Board members.

Lin Galea, chair of the Gatherings Committee, and Zita Macy, chair of the Membership Committee, will continue to serve this year. My term as chair of the Board continues until the end of 2007.

Please read carefully the newsletter items below. Many of them will give you more information about the initiatives that each of these new Board members are overseeing and indicate how you can participate in them.

Ultrera!

Michael Wyatt, Chair

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BRIDGE BUILDING: A NEW LOGO FOR AMERICAN PILGRIMS

Some of you may know that in the early days of our organization (not all that long ago), we had a logo that pulled together two distinctive symbols of what we were bringing together: a Santiago cockle shell and a California mission church bell tower. The bell tower rested on the hinge of the shell. In this way, our logo alluded to both the traditional cockle shell of Santiago and the string of missions founded by the Franciscans in this country, connected by another camino, the Camino Real, the “royal road” of the Spanish colonies here. That logo was on our stationary, on our credential, and on various annual gathering documents. However, we pulled that logo together rather quickly, needing to have something that would fill in a gap until we had the time and the expertise to design our logo more deliberately.

Well, we finally have a logo that we believe is distinctive and expressive. It was designed patiently and skillfully by Jon Cofsky, with guidance from Board members, Edie Bennett, Lin Galea, and Steve Pede. It was adopted by the Board as our official logo at our annual meeting in 2006. The logo shows a section of the Romanesque bridge at Puente La Reina, arching over a block that has the words “American pilgrims on the Camino.” The colors are rich: an aqueous deep blue and a tawny dusty gold—colors that for many of us defined the Meseta, with its searing bowl of sky and endless baked fields, but here pick up the colors of the river and the bridge.

The board members studied a number of designs. The runner up to the image of the bridge was a stark but dynamic sketch of a walking pilgrim. But the bridge kept appealing more and more. It brought back memories. It didn’t suggest an identity, or a gender, or even a mode of completing the pilgrimage. It went to the heart of our hope to be, as an association, the bridge between the pilgrims from our country and this ancient path that has called so many over the centuries to come and to follow it towards the West, towards an ancient shrine, towards the end of the world.

The symbol itself was first recommended to the Board by one of the members of our association, Claire Martinet. For her, the point was that “a bridge **connects.**” What is brought together on the Camino is incalculable: cultures, people, perspectives, our time before and our time after the walk, history and the present. In the words of a current Board member: “we hope to be a bridge from the New World to the Old by providing support to the Camino de Santiago.” But Claire also commented that a bridge presents us with a “transition:” we move from one side to the other, and things are not the same; we go and we return. And, of course, bridges are strong, built to carry many people, built to last through time.

Some of our present Board members responded to the “mystery” of the present logo design: the bridge stark against a dark sky, evocative of the experience of the Camino, moving into the unknown. For many of us the response was more primal. The colors were intense and full, direct and earthy, much like the Camino itself. The bridge, with its rough unmistakable outline, with its lift and drop, brought back warm memories. And, of course, it is at this bridge that “all the paths become one”—a claim that, as one Board member said, is also “symbolic of the teaching of all great religious leaders.”

We hope that this logo will remain with us for a long time, long enough to be easily recognizable and full of positive associations. We hope that you who see it and take it as your own by becoming members will live into its meaning. We hope it will be a reminder of what unites the various members to the association and of what moves us from our hopes for the association into one committed set of goals and actions. We hope it will become familiar in other countries, particularly in Spain, as our tribute to the precious heritage of which the Spanish confraternities and associations are the immediate custodians, and that it will be seen as our pledge to share with them the joyful burden of supporting the pilgrims who walk and the infrastructure of the Camino de Santiago.

Michael Wyatt, Chair

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CAMINO SUPPORT

At the Williamsburg Gathering Nicholas Hayes, Camino Support chair, held an open session on directions for future camino support. He offered an outline of ideas, asking for new ways we can support the camino and getting a sense of direction that was both realistic and desirable. Working from the aspects of both time and effort, Nick presented the beginnings of our efforts – on the ground donations of time and financial support, offered some ideas of continued support and asked for suggestions for new possibilities. The diagram below was used as a tool for discussion and may help inspire in you some thoughts of future support, steps that need to be taken to get there, and new ways we can help support the camino and the pilgrims who travel it.

For those of you unable to attend the Gathering we would like to hear from you also. We are looking for your ideas on ways that we can expand support for the Camino and for pilgrims "on the road". Currently we have an established training for hospitaleros with over 100 graduates to date. Our trainees serve as hospitaleros in albergues on the routes in both Spain and France. We provide gatherings of pilgrims annually to offer a means of connecting with others and providing information regarding the Camino. Another means of connecting is our website, providing information directly and links to other resources. Additionally, we have provided almost 400 credentials to pilgrims from all over the world so far this year. During the Gathering we were able to meet with the representatives from Spain to learn more about possibilities of involvement and contribution on the Camino itself.

Would you be willing to participate in some on-the-ground actions? Donating time, money and expertise? This is not a commitment; just getting a feel for the mood. Be creative. Help us to help you and the Camino. Send your thoughts and ideas to:

Nicholas Hayes
17 S. Buck Lane
Haverford Pa 19041
clubnick@mac.com

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HOSPITALEROS VOLUNTARIOS NEWS

Our annual Hospitalero Training took place this year March 6-8, 2007, coinciding with the Annual Gathering of Pilgrims which took place in historic Williamsburg, Virginia.

Volunteer hospitaleros work in hostels located on the Camino Frances, Via de la Plata, and Camino del Norte under the aegis of the Spanish Federation of Friends of the Camino. The training is for members of American Pilgrims who have had a camino pilgrimage experience and who have some facility speaking Spanish.

This year's training featured a program designed to prepare a volunteer hospitalero for the rewarding work of looking after an albergue and its many passing pilgrims. In addition to immersing ourselves in the history, culture and philosophy of hospitality along the Camino, we learned practical skills such as first aid for pilgrims, organizing and preparing simple meals, attending to the spiritual needs of pilgrims, and developing solutions for unexpected problems. Throughout the training, we heard evocative stories from past hospitaleros. The newly commissioned hospitaleros offered their first service by providing an impromptu welcoming meal for pilgrims arriving early for the Gathering on Thursday evening, providing a place to rest, share stories and join in a meal - a wonderful refugio experience. They continued to assist the process and pilgrims throughout the Gathering.

If you have ever thought that you would like to give back to the Camino through service in an albergue, our Hospitalero Training is for you. The next Training is being planned for March 2008 in Santa Barbara, California.

For further information please contact either Daniel De Kay (dandekay@sbcglobal.net) or Lin Galea (lin@lingalea.com) and check our website (www.americanpilgrims.com) in the fall for registration forms and specific details.

ANNUAL GATHERING OF PILGRIMS – WILLIAMSBURG, VA

Tenth Annual Gathering of Pilgrims - Pilgrimage to America
Held in Williamsburg, Virginia March 9-11, 2007

The annual Gathering of Pilgrims returned to its founding place in Williamsburg, Virginia for its tenth anniversary. This Gathering enjoyed a special historic character because 2007 is also the 400th Anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent British settlement in the New World. Our focus remained on the Camino de Santiago in Spain, but also reflected on pilgrimage in other times, places and traditions.

Official representatives from Santiago de Compostela in Spain traveled to Williamsburg to share in our conversations and to bring us gifts. During a buffet of imported Spanish tapas for our traditional Friday casual repast, we reconnected with old friends and made new ones, listening to stories, many from students who have gone on the Camino with George Greenia, with lots of familiar themes of discovery and renewed and new found understandings. We send many thanks to our friends from the Xacobeo organization in Galicia, Spain who provided generous funding for the Williamsburg Gathering and fabulous Spanish wines. Visit their website www.xacobeo.es for an great resource for pilgrims.

Saturday morning program sessions addressed a wide variety of interests. Those of a classical bent heard about pilgrimage in ancient Greece and Rome. The culinary treasures of Spain were explained by Don Harris, co-founder of LaTienda.com, a fine Spanish foods importer. From the physical,

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Training for Trekking, to understanding what it means to walk for spiritual or religious reasons, there was information, inspiration and awareness offered. One of the earliest American pilgrimages to Santiago in 1974 was relived with slides and a first hand report by Lynn Talbot, while some of our freshest pilgrims –local college students who trekked in 2005 and 2006– spoke as Younger Voices on the Camino.

Saturday afternoon we moved to the historic Wren Building on the campus of the College of William & Mary. Here two lectures and performances on the music of pilgrimage were presented, while nearby there were simultaneous presentations on medieval pilgrims and their military alter egos, the crusaders, and another, pilgrimage in the Islamic tradition. There was something for everyone.

At the Saturday night banquet our featured guest speaker was Edward Stanton, author of [The Road of Stars to Santiago](#). And on Sunday we re-created our own pilgrimage to America by offering our traditional pilgrims' walk together on Jamestown Island itself, with a morning prayer service in the restored ruins of the first English Christian church in the New World and a picnic lunch back in Williamsburg afterward.

The Gathering of Pilgrims is about learning about the Camino de Santiago but also experiencing the spirit of openness and friendship that allows our pilgrim stories to find their true voice and most understanding listeners. Between all the wonderful organized presentations and events there was much more in the way of connecting with old friends, meeting new ones, discussing past Caminos and planning for new ones with all the practical details and sharing feelings that that involves.

We gratefully thank Sandy Lenthall and George Greenia and their army of volunteers who made the organization and details of the Gathering seem effortless.

For more information about this or future gatherings and a look at the beautifully illustrated program from Williamsburg, visit our website www.americanpilgrims.com/events.

SACRED STEPS IN SPAIN

One of the outstanding events in Williamsburg was the opening of “Sacred Steps in Spain”, images of the Camino on film and canvas. Celebrating the experience of modern pilgrims from the United States and Canada who set out to retrace the path to Santiago de Compostela, the images in the exhibition capture the visions of the contributing artists gathered along their own pilgrimages on the Camino. The Minister of Tourism of the Community of Galicia in collaboration with the Embassy of Spain in Washington, DC has invited George Greenia to help organize a touring exhibit of this Art and Photography of the Camino de Santiago to tour North America. Representatives from both sponsoring groups were on hand in Williamsburg to inaugurate the exhibition in honor of American Pilgrims on the Camino. “Sacred Steps in Spain” will be touring the United States during the coming years. The exhibition website www.sacredstepsinspain.com is presently under construction, but eventually will have venue information. We will keep you posted in our newsletters and on our website www.americanpilgrims.com.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Board has formed a Communications committee with Jim Eychaner serving as chair. Among the tasks assigned to this committee will be that of implementing changes to the American Pilgrims website, including format, content, links, etc. The website is being maintained by volunteer Gene McCullough, to whom we are very grateful for his generous gift of time, expertise and enthusiasm.

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BOOK REVIEWS FROM OUR LIBRARIAN, Kathy Gower

Since this librarian has just completed the last stage of walking from Le Puy to St. Jean Pied-de-Port, the book reviews will be about the Chemin de Compostelle, Via Podensis portion of the beloved Camino de Santiago.

Way of St. James: Le Puy to the Pyrenees

Cicerone, Cumbria, UK, 2003

Alison Raju

Available from the Confraternity of St. James in London or in travel stores that sell the Cicerone imprint

TopoGuides for the GR65

Sentiers vers Saint Jacques de Compostelle

Le Chemin du Puy

Available only in French from Au Vieux Campuer in Paris, in shops in Le Puy and Conques

Indispensable, but not complete is Alison Raju's guide which covers the 740km French section of the route along the GR65 from Le Puy, through southwestern France to St. Jean Pied-de-Port and on into Roncesvalles in Spain. Alison Raju does a superb job with practical advice and definitions of accommodations along this very beautiful and altogether different (from the Spanish Camino Frances) route. The maps, however, are somewhat too primitive to follow, especially if one gets slightly off the path and is trying to find their way back. I found this guide to be very accurate for the most part, but would want just one more addition—that of the location of the picnic spots! Since much of the route is through forest or farmer's fields, it would be nice to know where the public fountains and benches were coming up. Because of the popularity of the route, both for pilgrims and others who may have a more personally cultural or physical interest, there are such rest stops, often in very unexpected places.

In France the GR people do their best to take one around fields and off roads and from year to year, even season to season, these can vary slightly. To be really well informed one needs to also carry the TopoGuides for the GR65, the Sentiers vers Saint Jacques-de-Compostelle; Le Chemin du Puy available in 3 slim volumes that outline all alternatives and variants, show water supplies and accurate distances between towns along the way.

Both guides indicate bars, shops, accommodations and connections, as well as kilometers traveled/kilometers left to go. The Way of Saint James contains lovely photographs and commentary on the vagaries in the lay of the route itself, as well as a listing of villages along the way that contain pilgrim and other St. James references. It was a very welcome companion, as was the Sentier vers Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle.

The Library also contains several volumes of large format picture books on the Chemin from Le Puy:

**The Road to Santiago,
Knud Helge Robberstad
(English language) (photos)**

**Carnets de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle,
Francoise Dermaut
(French language) (watercolor)**

**A Painting Pilgrim,
Mark Hoare
(English language) (watercolor)**

**Merveilles des chemins de Compostelle
Huchet & Boelle**

Email library@americanpilgrims.com to check them out.

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LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Bay Area (San Francisco) Pilgrim Walk from the Ferry Building to Sausalito

Ralph and I went on an incredibly wonderful hike with local members and supporters of the American Pilgrims on the Camino. About a dozen of us gathered at the S. F. Ferry Building to start out. The hike was organized and led by Lin Galea who did an outstanding job of providing us with background information on what we were seeing.



I'm including Lin's description of the hike in case anyone is looking for an excellent city hike. It wouldn't be the same as when we had the benefit of Lin's commentary, but it is well worth doing on your own. We accessed Coit Tower by cutting through the Levi Strauss plaza and climbed several flights of stairs on Telegraph Hill to reach Coit Tower. Along the way, we saw dozens of the parrots that were made famous by the film, "The Parrots of Telegraph Hill." We also stopped at the S.F. Art Institute to view one of Diego Rivera's murals. Susan Alcorn, member



Lin's details: Depart along the Embarcadero, up to Coit Tower, through North Beach, Russian Hill and the Marina District to the Presidio. Stop at the new Lucas Campus for coffee and a break. From there cross through the Presidio over the Golden Gate Bridge to the Marine side of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area....[then along] the Parade Lawn of East Fort Baker. From there, it is a short walk down into Sausalito for a ferry ride back to San Francisco.

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DO YOU HAVE LOCAL EVENTS TO SHARE?

We would love to report on Camino related activities in your part of the country. Are you planning a hike, a book reading, a movie? Let us hear from you so we can connect you with others who share your Camino interests and live or are visiting where you are.

And, in addition to announcements and news, we would love to hear of moments on the Camino - a memory, an experience, an exchange, a discovery, a word, a food – a piece of the Camino to share with your fellow pilgrims. Perhaps a photo or a poem to share or perhaps a new found understanding of a commonly understood idea, a pilgrim's perspective. Please send all ideas to newsletter@americanpilgrims.com.

Safe travels to everyone along your caminos.

American Pilgrims on the Camino

Michael Wyatt, Chair

Mary Wallis, Nominations Committee

Carlos Mentley, Secretary

Zita Macy, Membership and Credentials

Nicholas Hayes, Treasurer & Camino Support

Lin Galea, Gatherings and Hospitalero Training

Jim Eychaner, Communications (website, journal, newsletter)

Daniel DeKay, Hospitalero Training

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