# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

Dear Fellow Pilgrims:

I would like to call your attention to three items in this newsletter that I believe are significant. First, you will find an article from Jim Eychaner, Chair of our Communication Committee, on changes in our media. We have struggled for several years now to find the best way to stay in touch and also to offer something that can be seen as an enhancement of membership. Many of you have nudged us along with questions and requests about the journal, the website, the newsletter. I believe Jim's article will show that we shared those concerns and have been moving towards solutions that we believe will be sound economically and responsive to new possibilities.

Second, Nick Hayes, Chair of our Camino Support Committee, has written up a summary of the brainstorming conversation we had in March at our Annual Gathering. We asked those who were present to help us assess our approach to our support of the Camino. We received many helpful comments. The Board was going through a similar process at its meeting during the Gathering. We have, it seems to me, set high goals for ourselves since the formation of this association. In some ways, that has led to frustration, since not everything is possible immediately. The conversations at Williamsburg were very useful in terms of simplifying and focusing our next steps and enriched by the presence of members of the Galician Xunta there--who will be with us again in our 2008 Gathering in Santa Barbara.

Third, please pay close attention to the announcement about the search for new Board members. We added five members last year, who have benefited both the Board and American Pilgrims enormously. This year, we are looking for two or three new members. Two Board members are rotating off, so those positions need to be replaced. And if we reap a bumper crop of high quality, we will add three. Please consider that invitation to assist with governance thoughtfully. Mary Wallis is Chair of the Nominations Committee and would be happy to help you reflect on the scope of the commitment and the search process.

Now, for all of you walking, buen camino! And for all of you facing challenges back home, ultreya! Thank you for your support of our commitment to the Camino.

Michael Wyatt
Chair of the Board

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## BOARD SEARCH

American Pilgrims on the Camino is seeking volunteers to serve on its Board of Directors. Two to three new members are sought to fill vacancies resulting from term expirations and Board expansion. We are looking to fill these positions before the end of the current term, December 31, 2007.

- Active Board service will begin January 1, 2008.
- Board members serve for a period of three years.
- Board members meet quarterly; two meetings are scheduled as conference calls, two are planned as face-to-face meetings.
- Additional conference calls, to address a question or need, can occur between regularly scheduled board meetings.
- Board members serve as Chairs and/or members of committees of the Board and are expected to support the goals of the organization with time, treasure and talent.

If you are interested in working with American Pilgrims on the Camino as a board member, please contact Steve Pede, 2284 Ventana Path, Marietta, GA 30062 or sbped55@yahoo.com for an application and additional information. Please submit applications by August 31, 2007.

## COMMUNICATIONS

At the annual meeting in March 2007, the APOC Board voted unanimously to transition the Association's communication media from print to electronic. The most immediate changes will be an electronic newsletter, a re-designed web site, and suspension of the journal *American Pilgrim* after printing two new editions.

The Board's decision to suspend publication of *American Pilgrim*, the object of much dedicated volunteer effort, was especially difficult. The decision was based on the realities of national trends in personal communication style and a carefully prepared business plan that confirmed the unsustainably high cost of supporting *American Pilgrim*. Where electronic media including the web site and an e-newsletter are exceptionally low cost, traditional printing cost estimates show that one edition of *American Pilgrim* would use at least 25% of the Association's annual income.

An electronic version of *American Pilgrim* was ruled out as volunteer resources available for it are stretched so thin that production schedules have become impossible to predict. The Board hopes to see Volume 2 Numbers 1 and 2 produced this calendar year. Further editions are not anticipated.

The Board has come to understand that most member contacts are via the Internet for member communication. Also, member demand for Association actions "on the ground" in Spain made it clear that the Association's resources are best focused on high-priority activities.

Past editions of *American Pilgrim* have been top quality, as the business plan makes clear. Indeed, the Board agreed that the concept of *American Pilgrim* is highly sophisticated. However, the Board further agreed that execution of the concept requires a level of organizational maturity that APOC may not realize for some time.

The journal business plan will be posted on our website in the fall http://www.americanpilgrms.com/.

Jim Eychaner
Chair, Communications Committee

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## CAMINO SUPPORT

As American Pilgrims grows to be a significant presence with approximately 400 members, regular Annual Gatherings, a website, newsletter and more, providing support for pilgrims in Spain and for the Camino itself has moved up in priority. A meeting of Members at the Gathering in Williamsburg reviewed what could be done in the short, medium and long term, given our (early) stage of development.

We were all sensitive to the fact that there are many well established organizations already in place in Spain, as well as world-wide, which have already made significant contributions to the Camino infrastructure - Church bodies, national organizations, townships, as well as individuals. Any activity that we undertake will require that we build relationships and partnerships with them so that we may be seen as a trustworthy and value-adding partner. In any endeavor we will have to meet real needs that we can realistically deliver ... and sustain the effort over time. Full commitment.

As we reviewed the possibilities we were looking for a direction and approach that would build consensus within our membership and with the Camino community in general. This discussion is summarized below.

** We have already been training hospitaleros for some time and many have served in Spain.

** For the immediate future there was general agreement that we would be available on an as-needed basis for calls for assistance, for trail support, way-marking, trail-maintenance, etc.

** The medium and long term were variations on a common theme, that of supporting a refugio in Spain.

In the medium term the discussion centered on providing support for an existing refugio. This was seen as a means of getting practical experience on the ground, fitting within our desire to focus on the doable and the sustainable, and, in particular, allowing us to demonstrate our capacity to perform and our commitment. Our support would be financial certainly, but we would also provide volunteers to help improve the chosen site and act as hospitaleros. During the discussion, Daniel De Kay, pilgrim trainer extraordinaire, asked how many people in the audience would be willing, and had the time to be an on-the-ground hospitalero. Over 30 people stood up.

** The longer term option, that of having an American Pilgrims' dedicated refugio, was briefly mentioned, however it was agreed that partnering to support an existing refugio was the next logical step.

A delegation from the Xunta of Galicia was in the audience during this discussion. One of their missions, a search for resources to help them open up new refugios, matched our concept of partnering. After the Gathering the Board met with the Xunta delegation. We are now jointly exploring ways in which we can work together and are looking for specific opportunities which will not be limited to the Camino Frances.

Nicholas Hayes
Chair, Camino Support Committee

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## HOSPITALEROS VOLUNTARIOS NEWS

"One of the most beautiful moments I experienced as hospitalera was when three pilgrims returning from Santiago stopped in to show me their *compostelas*. I had last seen these pilgrims the morning they started off on their walk. One of them told me how helpful and encouraging my words were the night before she started the Camino. She had been very scared and didn't know if she would have the strength to do the Camino. Then she pulled a piece of paper from her pocket with the word "Ultreia" written on it. I had given it to her at the last minute, just before she left the albergue. I hadn't thought much of it because I was in the middle of dealing with several other pilgrims. She told me how much strength that tiny piece of paper had given her, how much it had meant as she walked towards Santiago. I hadn't been aware of the effect that even our simplest gestures can have on pilgrims. When it came time to leave my volunteer post I was in tears, I didn't want to leave!" (From Astrid Rios, American Pilgrims member and volunteer hospitalera in Ourense, July 2006).

American Pilgrims has an arrangement with the Federacion de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino whereby we send volunteers to albergues that are supported by the Association. Volunteers work for two weeks at a time, maintaining the albergues and assisting pilgrims. Our members have had some truly wonderful, unforgettable experiences while serving fellow pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. Last March we hosted a very successful hospitalero training course prior to the annual Gathering of Pilgrims in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The Spanish Federacion requires all volunteers to attend training sessions in order to prepare for service in the albergues they support. We have been fortunate to have some excellent trainers from Spain come as mentors for our own program. This year we started doing our own trainings, tailoring them to the needs of North American volunteers. So far we have trained 87 hospitaleros. They have been posted to albergues along the Camino Francés, the Via de la Plata, and the Camino del Norte.

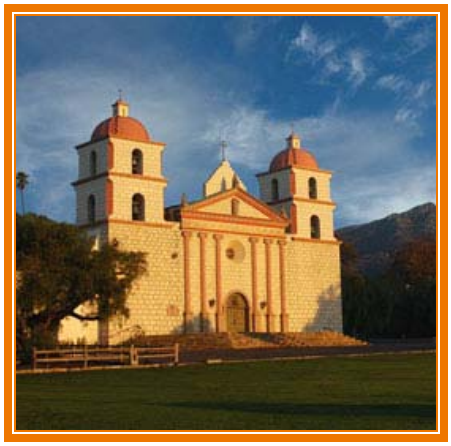
During the trainings we address subjects such as the history and traditions of hospitality along the Camino, cooking for pilgrims, and daily maintenance of an albergue. We also discuss first aid and spiritual support for pilgrims, interactions with the local community, and musical traditions of the Camino.

Our next training will be held March 4-6, 2008, in conjunction with the Annual Gathering at Mission Santa Barbara, in Santa Barbara, California. We look forward to an exciting and enjoyable few days of getting to know each other, gaining new skills, and furthering our volunteer support of the Camino de Santiago.

For further information regarding the next training contact Daniel De Kay, dandekay@sbcglobal.net.

ANNUAL GATHERING OF PILGRIMS – Santa Barbara, California

# OLD MISSION SANTA BARBARA CALIFORNIA



## AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO ANNUAL GATHERING

*Other Roads*

**March 7 - 9, 2008**

Hospitalero Training

*Tending Those Who Walk the Road*

March 4 – 6, 2008

Spiritual Retreat

*Walking the Interior Road*

March 9 – 11, 1008

For more information about the gathering
Go to AmericanPilgrims.com/gatherings

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Review of The Pilgrimage to Santiago by Edwin Mullins

This book is not a sharing of personal experience, but a gradual revealing of the flow of history during the time of the original pilgrimages to Santiago. Edwin Mullins has a deep knowledge of medieval Christian architecture and history, and his love of this period comes through clearly. His travels on the pilgrimage routes in the early 70s led to the publishing of this book in 1974, reprinted in 2001.

The author begins his story in Paris with the Rue St. Jacques. As he leads us down that ancient boulevard, we learn not only the official tale of how St. James came to be buried in Santiago, but also how that story came to be. From there the author guides us into considering the economic effects of pilgrimage and repercussions of the Moorish invasion.

When the 11th century St. James pilgrims went south, the river Loire and its tributaries were major obstacles. For several chapters, Mullins makes a driving exploration of this river region, searching towns and villages for places and objects of pilgrimage, in the process imparting the history of Christendom during the pilgrimage years. I credit his background as a filmmaker and writer on the visual arts for his vivid descriptions. In every chapter, interspersed with the story, you will read such things as:

"... contains the most extraordinary scene at Aulnay. Here is an evocation of chaos, of life without God: a world that is personified by a sequence of figures that can only have been let out of an asylum conceived in a nightmare, to howl and chatter and grimace in the ears of the mediaeval pilgrims ..."

One might expect a chapter entitled The Politics of Salvation to be intensely boring, but I found this treatise on power and influence to be one of the most interesting parts of the book. As in the other chapters, we learn of the works of the artist-craftsmen of the Middle Ages, but we also learn about the power of the French Church and the vast reach of the Benedictine monastery of Cluny.

As he gets into southern France, Mullins abandons the car for travel on foot, and this is his mode for most of the remaining route to Santiago. Bear in mind that this is before 1974, and to find the route, one has to ask around until someone can point out the ancient rubbled remnant of the path. He tells of his first encounter with Basque singing at a first-communion party in Larceveau, "... each man with his red wine taking up a well practiced part in the harmonies and trying to crack the roof with crescendos before refueling from the bottle in front of him ..."

Mullins continues across the Camino Francés; revealing pilgrim times to the reader. As we travel west with him, we find chapters such as Charlemagne Country, Hermits of Castile, A Feast of Bones, Bagpipes in the Rain, Santiago de Compostella rich in historic and architectural detail. At the conclusion of the book, you know very little about Edwin Mullins, but you will have a sense for the history and architectural beauty of those times.

This is not a quick and easy read, but I find myself going back to it again and again.

Ralph Alcorn
Shepherd Canyon Books
Publisher of Camino Chronicle: Walking to Santiago.

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## Review of A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago, by John Brierley - ISBN 1844090698

I've reviewed both editions of Brierley's guide on Amazon, but have used it since, so thought a revised review for American Pilgrims would be useful.

In the introduction to the 2nd edition, the author talks about the book being born out of a mid-life crisis. He says no more about it, but as we read through the introduction, we can see that he has a strong belief in pilgrimage as a means of change. He urges that you find a spiritual purpose for the journey, and has structured the guide to aid that spiritual purpose.

Brierley's 2003 edition - ISBN 1844090108 - was the first full color English language guide to the Camino Francés. The color maps, trail profiles and photos were a significant step up from anything else available. This came at a cost of a book weight of 15 oz. The 2006 edition is an improved guide and the weight has dropped from 15 oz to 10 oz, mostly from lighter paper weight, making it easier to carry. Mileages and refugio information have been brought up to date.

Brierley's guide is visually attractive: glossy paper, colored photos almost every page, multicolor maps and trail profiles, parts of text set off by shading. It has the standard information: mileages, refugio locations, number of beds, alternatives. The introduction has an overview, followed by planning and preparation information. The body of the guide is organized in 33 stages - each a typical day's travel with map and trail profile. The planning section has a detailed equipment list, travel info, essential phrases in Spanish and a short history of the Camino

Each stage begins with three paragraphs - the Physical Path - a narrative overview of the day's walk, the Mystic Path - to awaken you to the spiritual potential of the day's walk, and Personal Reflections - a quotation from the author's reflections. In each stage, there is a page with blank lines for the walker to write in their own reflections.

In the fall of 2006 we walked from Leon to Ponferrada, and carried the appropriate sections of several guides, including both the 2006 Brierley guide and the 2005 Confraternity of St. James guide. We found we were using mainly the Brierley guide, as at that time, the Brierley guide had the most accurate list of accommodations, and the colored maps with alternate routes were very helpful. That being said, it is the nature of guidebook accommodations to only be accurate as of the year published. Facilities change from year to year, and inevitably, publications will have typos and errors of fact. Do not rely on just one guide, and do future pilgrims a favor by emailing the publication's website if you find errors in the text. Whatever your Camino Francés guidebook, I suggest you get the current Confraternity of St. James guide as well.

Ralph Alcorn
Shepherd Canyon Books
www.backpack45.com
Publisher of Camino Chronicle: Walking to Santiago

## Books of interest, not yet reviewed:

ULTREIA! ONWARD! Progress of the Pilgrim
Edited by Robert Lawrence France
ISBN 0-9717468-5-0

Reflections on Spain's St. James and his way
Robert Hodum
ISBN 1-59232-083-x

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## FROM THE LIBRARY

New additions to the library:

Robert Ward, All the Good Pilgrims...Thomas Allen Publishers, Toronto 2007...a fine read from the author of Virgin Trails

John Brierley, Pilgrims Guide to the Camino Frances and Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino Portuguese...without a doubt, the most carried book written in English that I've seen on my last pilgrimage, May-June 2007

Within the Way Without, written & directed by Laurence Boulting, narrated by Sir Richard Attenborough...highly discussed on several list serves and a wonder way to reminisce many universal aspects of the Camino

Peregrinatio, written in Spanish by Matilde Asensi...fantastic illustrations for the story taking place in 1324

Thomas Cahill, Mysteries of the Middle Ages: Rise of Feminism, Science and Art from the Cults of Catholic Europe, Doubleday, 2006 has a wonderful section on Pilgrimage, also illustrated.

Thank you to all authors and for those who have generously made the media available for all.

To borrow books and/or videos from our library please email library@americanpilgrims.com

## PILGRIM ACTIVITIES

### Camino Anthology Contributions Requested – Brett Stuckel and Krista Bailie

Fellow Pilgrims –
We are putting together a book of stories, poems, photos and artwork from the Camino (any and all routes) and would like to extend our call for submissions to the entire American Pilgrims on the Camino community. There is no required subject matter or word limit, but please include the following:

Your contact information (name, address, email)
The route you took and when
If appropriate, please indicate the town/location of your submission
(For art and photo, we don't require publishing-quality scans right now, but will eventually. Also, on publication, all contributors will be eligible to receive royalties.)

Please email submissions to caminosubmissions@gmail.com.
We will also be happy to answer any questions you have about this project.
Thanks and buen camino!
Brett Stuckel and Krista Bailie

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## Capturing Young People on the Camino – Trey Comstock

In the summer of 2008, three college students are mounting an expedition to create a documentary about young people on the Camino de Santiago. The clear majority on the Camino are older people with greater resources, but there is a growing interest from college aged youth and younger, and the team, headed by former pilgrim, Trey Comstock, hopes to capture this voice on the Camino and see what it means for the future of the pilgrimage that we hold so dear in our hearts.

The project focuses on two main parts: research and capturing a voice. The first side is academic. How are the young pilgrims different from the older pilgrims? How are their motivations different? What infrastructure do they want to see on the Camino that would better serve them? The Camino can be an amazing and life altering experience for both young and old alike and should meet the needs of everyone who wishes to experience it.

The other focus is capturing the voice of the young people on the Camino and telling their story. Trey Comstock and his team think that young people have valuable and life changing stories to tell and insight to offer, too. They plan to capture and portray this growing, evolving, and valuable voice.

The team is eager and skilled but in desperate need of assistance. Although they have already receive a Monroe Scholars grant from the College of William and Mary, a project of this scope (filming for 5 weeks or more on the Camino, including living expense, flights, and equipment) is expensive, so they need the help of the pilgrim community to give what they can either through money, advice, encouragement, or prayer.

For more information on the project and for how to help, visit www.unperegrinoenvideo.org.

## IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Camino Art Exhibit Opening
September 23, 2007

Mile markers and yellow arrows, serendipitous miracles, stones at the foot of a cross, la ruta de las estrellas: Sharon Rosevear will be exhibiting a series of thirteen oil pastel reflections on her walk from Roncevalles to Santiago in 2000.

Friends of the Camino are invited to an opening reception Sunday, September 23rd, 2007, from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. in the lobby gallery of the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology. The art will be displayed from September 23rd through December.

Graduate Theological Union
2301 Vine Street
Berkeley CA 94708-1816
For further information, contact Sherry Rosevear: 707-537-6718

## Annual Bay Area Camino Walk

September 23, 2007

In conjunction with the opening of the Camino exhibit, this year's walk will take place in Berkeley, finishing with the reception at the Graduate Theological Union.

For further details contact: Lin Galea at lin@lingalea.co

## ANNUAL REPORT

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES - Year ended December 31, 2006

| **Support and Revenue** | | **Expenses** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Support | | Program Services | |
| *•Memberships* | | *•Credential* | |
| *•Contributions* | | *•American Pilgrim magazine* | |
| *•Corporate Contributions* | | *•Gathering/Training/Retreat* | |
| **Total Support** | $26,508 | *•Website* | |
| | | *•Camino Support* | |
| | | **Total Program Services** | $36,518 |
| Revenue | | Supporting Services | |
| *•Program Service Fees* | | *•Website* | |
| | | *•Management and General* | |
| **Total Revenue** | $26,069 | **Supporting Services** | $8,645 |
| **Total Support and Revenue** | **$52,577** | **Total Expenses** | **$45,163** |

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION - Year ended December 31, 2006

| **Assets** | | **Liabilities** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | $17,782 | Accounts Payable | $0 |
| Receivables | $0 | **Total Liabilities** | **$0** |
| Prepaid expense | $2,200 | | |
| **Total Assets** | **$19,982** | **Net Assets:** | |
| | | Unrestricted-Designated | $17,070 |
| | | Temporarily Restricted | $2,912 |
| | | **Total Liabilities and Net Assets** | **$19,982** |

2006 Statistics
381 members
800 credentials distributed
97 total volunteer hospitaleros trained through Dec 2006.
Note: Statements are based on the unaudited financial statement of American Pilgrims on the Camino, San Francisco, CA.

# AMERICAN PILGRIMS ON THE CAMINO-NEWSLETTER, JULY 2007

## 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 | mwyatt01@msn.com |
| Mary Wallis, Nominations Committee | mvwallis@pathcom.ca |
| Carlos Mentley, Secretary | cmentley@lander.edu |
| Zita Macy, Membership and Credentials | zitamacy1999@yahoo.com |
| Nicholas Hayes, Treasurer & Camino Support | clubnick@mac.com |
| Lin Galea, Gatherings and Hospitalero Training | lin@lingalea.com |
| Jim Eychaner, Communications (website, journal, newsletter) | jim623mo@comcast.net |
| Daniel DeKay, Hospitalero Training | dandekay@sbcglobal.net |