

Escapes Chapter 8 RV Club

LA CONEXIÓN MEXICANA



Spring 2011

Volume XXVII

Number 1

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New Chapter 8 Board members in Quartzsite, AZ Feb. 2011 photo by Jan Biller

Missing are: Don Busick, Arlo Thomas, Fred Goll, Ron & Sue Mayer

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MENSAJE de los PRESIDENTE

Message from President Cynthia Ponder

It was great to see so many of you at our Quartzsite gathering in January. Many have asked that if rally schedules allow it we consider making this a new tradition for the group. Maybe just one or two days and nights of fun and fellowship.

We held our annual meeting at this event and had wonderful success in recruiting this year. For the first time ever we have filled the positions of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice-Presidents. They are all thinking ahead to great rally locations and will be spending time scouting out the territory over the months ahead.

Dannie Dolan - 1st VP and his wife Beverly were kind enough to invite Jim and I to join them, with Charlie - 2nd VP and his wife Dawn Boles along with Sherry and Jack DeArmond in Puerto Peñasco after leaving Quartzsite. They are planning a great Rally there for 2012. We had fun exploring a location we had never been to, eating lots of great food and seeing wonderful sights. Well we had to find the best places for you, Right?



The opportunities for charity outreach are many and we will need a strong charity committee to choose between them. We started already on this trip by taking food to a children's home and taking up a collection among ourselves to pay an electric bill for a home for the elderly there. Maybe next year Denny and Dona Martinsen - 3rd VP will invite us to explore their location too.

Ed Biller continues to serve on the board as Past President and his wife Jan has become our Newsletter Editor replacing Barbara Ellis who has work assignments which prevent her from continuing. You can see in this edition what a great job Jan is doing.

We also had two new people step up to be Secretary - Joy Melton, and Steve Bufty as Treasurer. They are already working hard to maintain the records of our chapter well. They are taking the place of George Young who has served Chapter 8 extraordinarily well over the past several years as Treasurer, Row Rep, and took on the job of Secretary for the last part of 2010. He deserves our Thanks and a Margarita on the house if you see him and his lovely wife, Susie down the road somewhere.

Pete Petrie who was a Past Wagon Master, and wonderful friend to me, also has a successor to his two years of work as our Membership Chairperson in Ron and Sue Mayer. They will be glad to be known for their own work instead of "Shawna's parents". They brought both of their daughters on the Rally in 2010 to Kino Bay and Shawna served as our Interpreter. They will have a busy year as they will be actively involved in Chapter 8's newest adventure into the technology world.

Don Busick has been our Webmaster and Yahoo Forum Moderator for several years. He has done a great job and we were all thrilled to see him and his wife Mary in Quartzsite. He continues his job in





those positions. Dona Martinsen will also continue in her position as chapter Historian.

Jim and I want to thank Rusty and Marcy Davidson, Roger and Brenda McFillen, Susie Young, Pat Macias for all of their help and all the many others wonderful Escapees who just pitched in as needed throughout the gathering at Quartzsite. It would not have been such a success without all of your help.

The great news is that we raised over \$1200.00 Dollars for Care through your generous donations and auction participation.

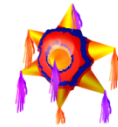


The enthusiasm was great to be around in Quartzsite. We had members from Rallies in 2005 and before, members from 2010 and those who have never traveled in Mexico. The times to talk and share were wonderful. The number of new volunteers who stepped up into leadership positions was exciting to see and the response to our Charity Auction and donations was outstanding.

We are a stronger chapter when our membership steps forward to volunteer and diversify the number of people in leadership. Jim and I are so thrilled to be a part of this Chapter. We look forward to working and traveling with all of you in the coming years.

Cynthia Ponder

Wagon Master 2012 Report



Hello everyone in Chapter 8 of the Mexican Connection. My name is Dannie Dolan and I am your new Wagonmaster for the 2012 Mexican Connection Rally. My wife, Beverly, and I are from Brighton, Colorado and have been Escapees since 2007. I retired from the railroad after 38 years and we became fulltimers. Our membership with the Mexican Connection started in 2009 with the trip to Guaymas.

The middle two weeks of February we were down in Puerto Peñasco, Mexico working hard to find a place to hold our 2012 Rally, visiting restaurants to find great places to eat, taking some tours to find out what is available, talking to locals about all the things that are exciting to do. We ate at some exciting places with good food and stayed at a very good RV Park. During our travels we have found some very good Charities that we will be able to help. We have discovered that the people in Puerto Peñasco are very friendly and tourist friendly.

We are still working out the details for the pre-Rally but I think we have come up with a great place for the pre-Rally. We hope that everyone will be able to join us for the 2012 Rally. In our next newsletter I will have the details worked out and some websites for you to visit to see what we are offering for tours.

Dannie & Beverly Dolan
Dolanwagonmaster2012@yahoo.com.

Funcionarios de Capítulo 8

Chapter 8 Elected Officers

President

Cynthia Ponder

pondermexico@gmail.com

1st Vice President

Dannie Dolan

Dolanwagonmaster2012@yahoo.com

2nd Vice Presidents

Charlie & Dawn Boles

wagonmaster2013@gmail.com

3rd Vice Presidents

Denny & Dona Martinsen

dnd2mex@gmail.com

Secretary

Joy Melton

rvjmelton@aol.com

Treasurer

Steve Bufty

stevebufty@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President

Ed Biller

billerej@yahoo.com

Appointed Officers

Membership Chairman

Ron & Sue Mayer

rosumay@msn.com

Webmaster

Don Busick

don9773@sbcglobal.net

Assistant Webmasters

Arlo Thomas

mc8@Krystonia.info

Fred Goll

fredrickgoll@yahoo.com

Historian

Dona Martinsen

dnd2mex@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Jan Biller

chapter8.newsletter@yahoo.com



What makes a successful chapter? It is a group of **old and new** friends coming together to share some good times – fun activities and of course a meal or two. It is a group that is warm and welcoming to not only well known friends, but especially to new members that help a chapter to grow. It is a group that does something new and interesting each rally, so it is always fun to get together to share good times and new adventures.

The President leads by enthusiastic leadership (the glue that gives the members direction) and keeps the chapter growing and a happy place to be. And it is the members that always need to step up to volunteer --- sometimes again and again – to keep the chapter active and growing. When the chapter events are fun – interesting – welcoming --- new members will come back and the chapter will grow.

As a chapter member we Thank You each time you:

- Greet everyone with miles of smiles
- Help with set up
- Help with clean up
- Bring a **new** group activity or game to share
- Bring a friend to help grow the chapter
- Ask “What can I do to help?”

SKP Hugs Susie & Denny Orr
dennsuu@aol.com

Begetting of a Treasurer

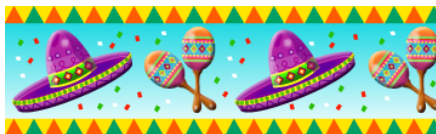
Steve Bufty has been elected as your 2011-2012 Chapter 8 Treasurer. Steve and his wife Donna Patten have been travelers to Mexico by motorhome since the late 1970s. They have been on the road full-time since 1996 and members of the Mexican Connection for most of that time although doing most of their travels to Mexico on their own with 1 or 2 other couples. In recent years however their Mexico travel has been with Chapter 8.

Steve spent a 32-year career with McDonnell Douglas working on both Ballistic Missile Defense and the International Space Station. Donna retired after a 24-year career in the Air Force. Their two sons and friends who live in "stick-houses" think their lifestyle is crazy but they love their life on the road.

For more decades than they would like to admit, Steve and Donna have also been into Scuba diving, sailing, water and snow skiing, and lots of world-wide traveling. Active in their Scuba club, Steve served numerous terms as club president, treasurer, secretary, divemaster, and quartermaster - sometimes all at once!

As newly elected Chapter 8 Treasurer, Steve is currently working with the Webmaster in setting up the new online membership processes that will include dues payments by PayPal.

Along with Donna as his trusted assistant, Steve plans to serve his duties well as treasurer of the Mexican Connection Chapter 8.



Hi,
I'm
Joy

Hi, I'm Joy Melton, Secretary. I started this year with three trips to Mexico, and I might even be going again soon. I will be helping Dannie and Beverly Dolan with Check-In at next year's Rally. I am the Row Chair for the Gillette, WY Escapade and have a terrific team already in place. I look forward to seeing all of you in Wyoming in August and at next year's Rally in Puerto Peñasco.

I retired from managing an orthopedic group for too many years to count. I enjoy my travels with my Sparkle Plenty (Afghan hound) and my Yuma street dog, Tag Along. Mexican Connection is an excellent way to see Mexico, whether you are a novice or experienced Gringo.

THE METRIC SYSTEM

Distance

1 kilometer = 0.62 miles

1 mile = 1.61km

Volume

1 liter = .26 US gallons

1 US gal = 3.79 lt

Weight

1 kilogram = 2.21 pounds

1 lb = 0.45 kg

Temperature

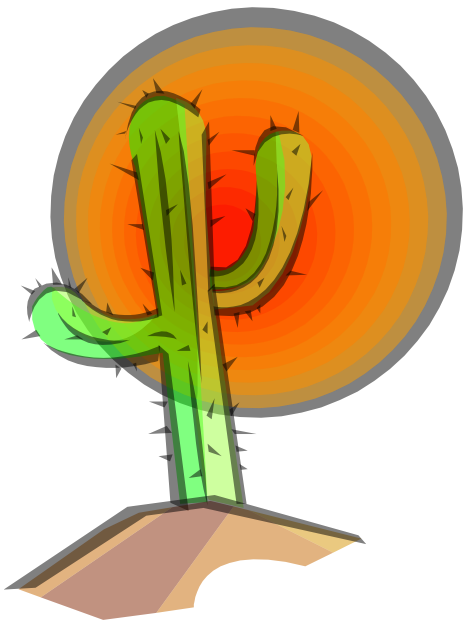
F° to °C [(F° - 32) x 5/9]

°C to F° [(°C x 1.8) + 32]

Formula for translating cost of pesos per liter to dollars per gallon at the gas pump:

Price per liter (pump price) x
3.79 (liters per gallon) ÷

exchange rate of pesos per
dollar or: $P \times l \div e = \$/gal$



Hola from Membership

We are Ron and Sue Mayer (SKP# 94945) from Springfield, Illinois, Land of Lincoln and bad Governors. We've been Escapees since 2006 and members of Mexican Connection, Chapter 8, since 2008. We are the Membership Chairmen for the coming year. We've been retired since 2003 and enjoy the RV lifestyle, travel and seeing the beautiful country we've been blessed to live in. The southwest is the most delightful place in the world and Mexican travel is so much fun. We were in the group last year that traveled to Kino Bay. The trip was just great and participants were fantastic. We met some great people along the way. The folks in Mexico are basically kind, honest, hard-working, and loving. We hate to see them all vilified based on a few bad apples. We're looking forward to traveling with you all in the future. If you travel to Mexico with the group, it'll be a trip you'll want to repeat again and again.

Gracias, happy travel,
Ron and Sue Mayer

Our BIG News Items for 2011

By: Cynthia Ponder

Our BIG NEWS ITEMS FOR 2011 came out of suggestions which were informally approved on two different occasions by the members present at Quartzsite. We are entering the Electronic Age in Paying our Dues and Future Rally Fee's.

There will be a link on the <http://mexicanconnection08.com/> website to pay our dues for one or more years on PayPal. If you are already a member of PayPal you just sign in. If not take a couple of minutes to join and then you can pay by credit or debit card. If you prefer, you can set up a withdrawal from your bank account electronically for a one-time payment.

Pay Pal will be charging us a very small amount to handle these transactions. We will not have to handle large numbers of checks through the mail and risk them being lost in transit. We will have a computer set-up at THE ROW at Escapade, if internet is available, where you can sign in and renew your membership or join right there. We will all be able to set up a personal password which will allow us to check our membership status for ourselves on our website.

We will have duplicate records maintained on PayPal and by our Membership Chairperson. PayPal will automatically send out reminder notices within the 30 days before April 1st when all of our memberships expire on a yearly basis.

If you really hate technology or do not have access to it; Ron Mayer will still accept Printed Membership Applications and checks sent to his mailing address. You will still receive a reminder notice the March before your membership is set to expire.

The research for this project was led by Don Busick. The entire board of Chapter 8 had the opportunity to try the system and offer helpful suggestions. A final version was tested and approved by the board in March 2011. The link will be available for renewing or joining in April. Read other articles in this newsletter for more detailed information.

In doing this we wish to remind everyone that our standing rules state that all members, both new and renewing, pay \$6.00 per year for dues. The additional \$2.00 requested from new members in the past was for a decal and mailing information to them. We need to address how to handle the distribution of decals in the future as a membership question.

The other item we need to discuss as a general membership is the approval of the action of the board. This membership approval will continue the PayPal program of processing our dues and future rally fees. We were authorized informally but not at the annual meeting to pursue this action. We will have a lot more information about how it will work for Chapter 8 if we use it for a few months.

The Membership then needs to ratify the decision that the board has made and respond to any further proposals the board needs to make to implement the new feature well.

Therefore, the Board of Chapter 8 Calls a Special Membership Meeting to be held during the time of the “Social” which will be held at the 2011 Escapade in Gillette, Wyoming. It will require the presence of 10 members and 1 elected officer to have a quorum. A simple majority of the members present will carry a vote on the items presented for approval.

The official wording of all items to be presented to the membership will be on the website and the forum prior to the meeting. It is the intention of the board to deal only with specific items related to membership, paying of membership, and processing of decals and when to do so at this meeting.

We will accept email questions on the forum or directed to myself as the representative of the board, Cynthia Ponder as President of The Mexican Connection Chapter 8 at pondermexico@gmail.com. All questions and answers will be posted as a group on both the website and on the forum.

Our 1st Vice President has already asked us to prepare the PayPal system to accept registration payments for the 2012 rally. Work is underway to insure that can be done smoothly. This would again reduce the necessity of checks in the mail, allow people to pay for a rally by credit card and allow our Canadian friends to pay with much less difficulty.



The general membership of Mexican Connection or new members are able to pay for their dues with PayPal online at Join/Renew website www.mc8renew.com. The link will be on escapees.com/chapter8 and mexicanconnection08.com. You have options of paying for one year, two years, three years, five years or recurring (automatic renewing) each year. Each option sends you a renewal notice about 30 days in advance.

- Once you click on the option you want, it will ask you for your SKP# and e-mail address along with a couple more things. This is to set up an account with Mexican Connection (you will need this later). Any password that you try to enter when first registering will be ignored by the system but you will be sent a password that you can then change to whatever you want.
- You will then be able to click on PayPal as the way to pay assuming that you already have a PayPal account or are willing to set up a PayPal account which involves paying directly from a credit card, debit card or directly from a bank account using a routing number (PayPal has been a very safe and secure system).
- PayPal will ask all of its questions and then take your money as it normally does.
- You will receive about three to four confirmation e-mails (from webmaster Don Busick, Joomla and PayPal) stating that you have set up an account and it assigns your user name and password (which can be changed once you log back into your account). You will have to access your account to check the status of payments or when your renewal date is.

Membership is from April 1st to April 1st of the following year. Dues are \$6.00 per year for every SKP#. New members joining after the 1st of the year will have their first year of membership run until April 1st of the following year.

If you have any questions, please contact Ron Mayer, Membership Chairman, at rosamay@msn.com.



Health of the Chapter

By: Roger "Spook" McFillen

I've only been a member since Y2K, so I don't know a LOT of history of this chapter, but I've seen it thru good times and bad; and from my view point, the GOOD TIMES are here! (or ahead!)

I was very impressed with the annual meeting at Quartzsite in late January. That was the smoothest Mexican Connection rally meeting I've ever attended & I think I've only missed two. Pres. Biller had it all together! He marched thru the agenda with very few questions (showed lots of preparation!) (The 7 P's) All the officers had worked very hard getting folks to step up to take the offices we needed filled. It's the first time I can remember ALL Wagon Master positions filled for THREE years in advance. I talked to all three & they are READY & looking forward to leading some GREAT trips (Dannie & Beverly Dolan 2012 to Puerto Peñasco, Charlie & Dawn Boles 2013 to San Felipe, Denny & Dona Martinsen 2014 to either Alamos or Mazatlan).

Yes, there are still some drug war problems in Mexico, but nothing we can't overcome with proper prior planning. There are many places where friends of ours are NOW that are completely safe & they have no problems walking into the town square AT NIGHT, or going to markets and sightseeing. If you look at the number of deaths by personal attack, shootings, hijackings, etc. you stand a much better chance of getting caught in a cross fire or shooting incident NORTH of the border than you do south of it.

It's amazing the amount of talent we have in this chapter. You don't get a good feel for it until you ask for volunteers to take the long-term commitments. Third Vice President thru Immediate Past President is a FIVE year commitment! It's great to meet folks that are willing to dedicate that much of their time to make the chapter what it is today. These folks have the talent we need to keep this chapter headed in the right direction: Dannie & Beverly Dolan, Wagon Masters 2012; Charlie & Dawn Boles, Wagon Masters 2013; Denny & Dona Martinsen Wagon Masters 2014.

The Ponder's stepped up to fill the Presidency after the chapter had been through some very tough times. Membership was way down, morale was way down and some folks didn't expect the chapter to survive the next one or two years. Then as Wagon Masters they planned and set up a trip that had to be cancelled. That had to hurt after all they put into getting ready for that trip. MY hat is off to them for all their efforts, but that was NOT wasted effort! That trip is "in the can" as the movie folks say - available for anyone to pick up and run with whenever the need presents itself!

Ed & Jan Biller (first timers) said they'd be the next Wagon Masters (at the end of the Guaymas Rally), just as the Ellis' had the year before in Guanajuato (also first timers!) Those were GREAT rallies! I think Jan & Ed set a new standard for the road log & info package they put together! Most impressive! The Ellis' raised the bar on the Wagon Masters' handbook that now contains just about everything a new Wagon Master needs to know & consider when planning a trip/rally in Mexico. Don Busick, our webmaster, has the chapter website in superb shape! Easy to use & he's looking into adding a PayPal section so we can pay our chapter dues by PayPal & save the chapter a LOT of money in postage & printing!

-Continued on next page-

Now we have a new slate of hard-charging officers & volunteers that will lead the chapter once again through the challenges we face traveling in Mexico. It won't be easy. Nothing worthwhile ever is; but with their dedication, drive, new ideas & leadership they will get the job done. It won't be to the satisfaction of ALL. Ya can't please ALL the people ALL the time. But they will do it with class and hard work & we'll all have a great time in Mexico. Remember, they can't do it by themselves. This outfit runs on volunteers and ALL the committees need help, soooooooo are YOU part of the problem or part of the solution? It's up to ALL of us to do OUR part to make Chapter 8 succeed in our mission of introducing folks to travel in Mexico and to show them how easy it is once you've done it a few times. AND the need for our charity work is even greater today than it was just a few years ago. So start thinking NOW about things you can take to the next rally that are greatly needed in Mexico. The easiest thing to take across the border is CASH or just add it to your check when you pay your rally fees.

Sooooo, what's my bottom line? Chapter 8 is alive & well in ALL areas. We have what it takes to meet today's challenge of RV'ing in Mexico. We know HOW to do it & explain it to others. There's plenty of safety in traveling in groups as we do. That's one of the reasons we do it that way and pick the group leaders with experience in Mexico. I'm looking forward to getting back to Mexico to some of our favorite places. Chapter 8 rallies are a great way to start a trip like that or finish off a trip.

Brenda & I have done both and we love it down there.

We hope to see YOU on the next trip!

From your Newsletter Editor

By: Jan Biller

Hola amigos,

As you have already read in this newsletter, I am your new newsletter editor. I want to thank Barb Ellis for doing a great job for the past couple years. I know she enjoyed it.

The newsletter will come out four times a year - March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31 on the Mexican Connection website: <http://mexicanconnection08.com/>. Make sure you check in to see what is new and going on. I have enjoyed putting this newsletter together and hope you find it easy to get around and find what you want. If you have any suggestions you can send them to me at chapter8.newsletter@yahoo.com. Please feel free to send me articles and/or photos for the next newsletter. If you send photos I will need to know who took them and where they were taken. Please send them in a full size, not reduced (it makes them fuzzy).

I hope to see you around somewhere in our travels.