

LA CONEXIÓN MEXICANA



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MENSAJE de los PRESIDENTE

Message from President Charlie Boles

We just arrived back in the USA from San Felipe. Dawn & I now call San Felipe our second home. We were introduced to Chapter 8, seeing it as the cheapest way to go to Mexico. The more I learned about Chapter 8 the more I said, "What a concept". Experienced travelers volunteering to help first time travelers visit Mexico, have fun and offer charity to those needing help due to conditions beyond their control. Our first trip was to Kino Bay Sonora MX. It was so easy and safe. Chapter 8 makes traveling to Mexico for the first time, comfortable, safe and easy. What a nice thing to do, take others to Mexico, show them how wonderful the people of Mexico are, and that most of Mexico is as safe as small town U.S.A. We really liked the whole concept and said we can do that and we did.

First of all I'd like to thank everyone involved for making this rally happen. The 2013, 28th Escapees Chapter 8, The Mexican Connection Rally was a success. Pete's Camp, San Felipe, Baja, Mexico was our destination. 40 rigs about 70 people and their pets meeting at Imperial Valley Expo, Imperial Valley CA. On the third day we headed south across the border with ease. A short time later we were boon docking on the beach at Pete's Camp. Boon docking was something new for some of us, but waking up camped on the beach to sunrise over the ocean for 10 days put a smile on everyone's face. The tranquility of Pete's Camp Beach and the easy going comfort of San Felipe were comforting. After the first day even our newest members were exploring town on their own in comfort. San Felipe's Carnival provided a small town in tough economic times a reason to smile (If you were warmed by a serape and a little Tequila). Seems like every one ate out a lot there was always talk of great places to eat. As usual on a chapter 8 rally members found where to get their RV's, trucks and toads repaired, painted and washed. The San Felipe Scorpions 4WD club let some of our group on a 90 mile cross country tour with a stop at Joses (Desert 7/11).

Chapter 8 raised \$6000, distributed to 4 local grass root charities and donated another \$1000 to CARE. Part of the group helped place a slide in camper on a lot to provide shelter for a man previously sleeping in small upright boat. Chapter 8 members are looking ahead to try provide disabled children in San Felipe with long term care.

I understand that in the planning stages is the 2014 Chapter 8 rally, possibly to Ensenada and then south lead by Lin & Maryke Hines

Next year bring your friends and theirs!

Thanks for the opportunity.

Charlie & Dawn Boles



2014 WAGONMASTER REPORT

By: Lin and Maryke Hines



The destination of the 2014 Chapter 8 Rally will be Ensenada, Baja California. Dates are now firm for February 3-13 2014 with Pre-Rally Organization and Training at the San Diego Metro KOA in Chula Vista, CA on Feb. 3-4 then moving to Estero Beach Resort in Ensenada February 5-11, 2014. On February 12, we'll take the pleasant drive 116 miles south to Playa El Pabellón, a great beach campground south of San Quintin, for 2 days. If you want to relax after a busy rally, this is the place! You'll probably want to stay longer here!

We, your Wagonmasters, have been members of Chapter 8 since 2001 and have participated in 10 great Mexican Connection Rallies since then. Our first Chapter 8 Rally in 2002 was right here in Ensenada, which everyone loved! We were also the 2008 Rally Wagonmasters for a 17 day progressive rally with eight 2 day stops, starting in Ensenada and working our way down to Mulegé in Baja California Sur.

The 2014 Rally will be a very easy and safe rally, with Ensenada being only 75 miles from the border, which we will drive in groups. Only a Mexican Tourist Visa (FMM) is needed, which we will all get at the nearby Tijuana border during the pre-rally. No car permits are required for the whole of the Baja Peninsula. As usual, you will need Mexican vehicle liability insurance.

Estero Beach is a beautiful resort on the waters of a tranquil bay of the Pacific Ocean. Their RV Park has 38 full hookup sites and lots of room for dry camping. There is a beautiful swimming pool and hot tub, tennis and volleyball courts and incredibly beautifully landscaped grounds. The birdwatching in the marshes is excellent and the sunsets are spectacular! The excellent Estero Beach Museum features "40 Centuries of Mexican History." The beachside setting, the food and margaritas in Las Terrazas Restaurant are superb, as you will see at our Welcome Dinner and Farewell Dinner with a few surprises!

Ensenada is a very easy town to explore. There are numerous large ultra-modern Mexican Supermer-cados with a great selection, plus a Walmart Supercenter, Home Depot, Costco, Office Depot! You will feel at home with the big box stores, but we hope you will explore the famous Los Globos flea market and its fruit and vegetable market, the local panaderias and tortillerias, and the Malecón!

There is an excellent History Museum and art gallery at the beautifully restored 1930's ex-casino and Cultural Center Riviera del Pacifico, and of course don't forget to stroll on the Malecón and have a lunch of delicious fish or shrimp tacos at the fish market. Fish tacos are a famous Ensenada invention and shouldn't be missed! Grab a cool one at Hussong's Cantina or have dinner in one of the excellent restaurants downtown. Even at night it is easy and safe to go downtown for shopping and dinner, but do carpool, as the parking can be difficult!

We hope to include a City bus tour to orient you to all Ensenada has to offer and maybe an optional bus tour of the well-known Baja wine country in the Guadalupe Valley, with many excellent wineries and tasting rooms. Just south of Ensenada on Punta Banda is the famous La Bufadora, a spectacular blowhole, where the ocean shoots a column of spray that bursts with a loud roar 50+ feet into the air! Fishing and sightseeing boat trips can be booked at several places on the Malecón, and whale watching trips to see the migrating California Grey Whales are also possible.

Registration will begin during the 2013 Escapade, where we will have a full exhibit of the Rally area and the facilities as well as a colorful slide show. The registration form will also be in the Summer Chapter 8 newsletter and on the Chapter 8 website: <www.mexicanconnection08.com>. You can sign up for full hook-up sites or dry camping, but after the FHU sites are filled, only dry camping will be available, and we will go by date of registration/Paypal or check payment received.

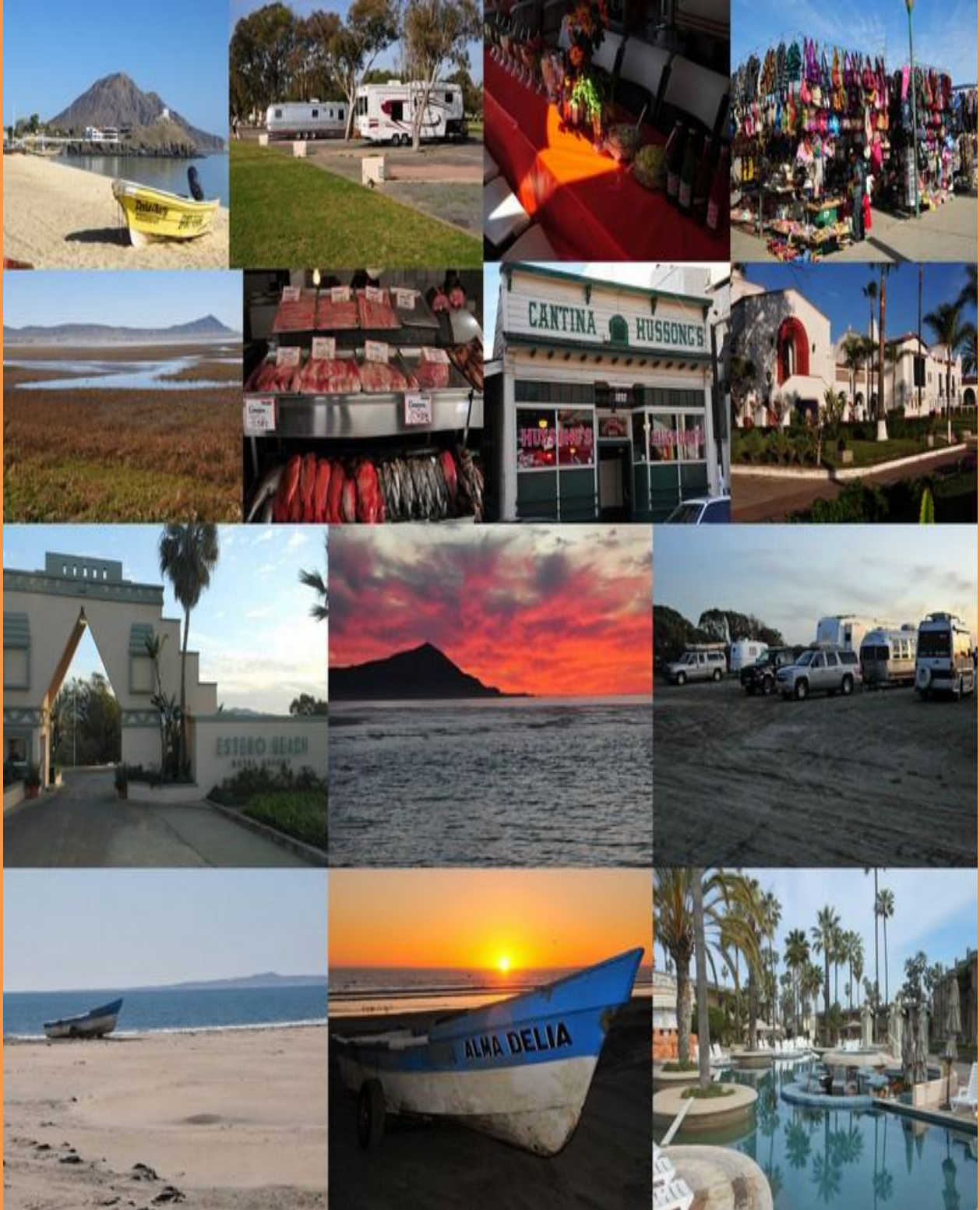
The total round trip from the U.S. border to Playa El Pabellón will be just less than 400 miles, making it easy for the newer rigs requiring ULSD diesel to come along with us! The Rally extension to Playa El Pabellón will be shown as an option on your registration form @ a fee of \$10 US per night. There are 11-- 15A electric sites available for a modest additional charge payable to Maria, the manager. Water, dump and super clean restrooms and hot showers are included. A road log will be provided in your Rally Packet.

The main part of the Rally will end on February 11 with a Farewell Dinner at Estero Beach Resort. We hope that most of you will continue on with us on Feb. 12, when we'll move in groups to Playa El Pabellón. Otherwise there will be signup sheets for groups going back to the border, further south into Baja beyond El Pabellón to Mulegé or Los Cabos or headed east on Hwy 3 to San Felipe, etc.

We are still working on contacts for Charity possibilities. Ensenada may look like a well to do city, but there are definitely needs here and in the surrounding areas. More details in future Chapter 8 newsletters.

Mark your calendars and come enjoy beautiful Baja California in February 2014!! Tell your friends!

ENSENADA - BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO



Funcionarios de Capitulo 8

Chapter 8 Elected Officers

President

Charlie & Dawn Boles

wagonmaster2013@gmail.com

1st Vice President

Lin & Maryke Hines

linhines@earthlink.net

maryke2@earthlink.net

2nd Vice President

Ann Marie Arnold

amapgm9697@gmail.com

3rd Vice President

Larry Brown

lbrown10@hotmail.com

Secretary

Orene Clarke Brown

orenebrown1@gmail.com

Treasurer

Steve Bufty

stevebufty@yahoo.com

Appointed Officers

Membership Chairman

Maryke Hines

MexicanConnectionMembership@yahoo.com

Co-Webmaster

Don Busick

don9773@sbcglobal.net

Co-Webmaster

Lynn Waite

rlwaite@yahoo.com

Historian

Dona Martinsen

dnd2mex@gmail.com

Charity Committee

Charlie & Sue Schaeffer

allc2001@bellsouth.net

Newsletter Editor

Shelly Dominek

chapter8.newsletter@yahoo.com



New Board Member Intros:



Larry Brown
2016 Wagonmaster and 3rd VP
&
Orene Clarke Brown
Secretary



Originally from Kentucky, Larry lived in Maine for 37 years before retiring in 2003. He began his career in education as a teacher and guidance counselor. After earning his doctorate he became a psychologist and a high school principal. Changing careers, he then moved on to own and operate four nursing homes in Maine over 27 years. Larry was elected to 3 terms in the Maine Senate. He was a private pilot, flying a Cessna 182 and a Kitfox.

In 2001 Larry and Orene bought their first motorcoach on EBay, and after retirement in 2003 began traveling about 7 months a year. Now in their second coach, over the past 10 years they have covered most of the United States, and much of Canada and Mexico. They have a desert home in Arizona and a lake home in Maine.

Originally from Maine, Orene spent her career in education and education non-profits at many levels, as a Kindergarten tutor, Adult Literacy Program Director and an Elderhostel Program Director. After completing a Master's Degree in Public Administration she moved to the post-secondary level as a college Administrator. As one of her students once said, she had worked with students "from sperm to worm."

In her spare time she served 14 years on her coastal Maine K-12 school board, the last 12 of those years as board chair. She was also elected chair of the Maine School Board Association for three one year terms, and was subsequently elected to two three year terms on the National School Board Association Board of Directors.

The Browns are active in Chapters of Family Motor Coach Association, Good Sam, and Escapees Mexican Connection, and have volunteered at Escapees CARE Center in Livingston, TX.

Plans for the 2016 Mexican trip are in very preliminary stages, but the likely destination will be Playa Bonita RV Park in Puerto Penasco.

Anne-Marie M. Arnold



Hola,

I am your newly drafted 2nd Vice President which means that I will be the Wagon Mistress for the 2015 Mexican Connection Rally, destination to be determined.

I am a Connecticut native married to Peter my high school sweetheart and best friend. We have two children living in Connecticut, three grandchildren and multiple grand doggies.

I was a business student and worked in that field during my career. I retired from the State of Connecticut, Department of Information Technology as their Payroll Director in June of 2011.

We have been avid campers for 30+ years. We have camped in tents, pop-ups, Class A's, Class C's, trailers, and 5th wheels (in that order). Our goal was to retire and become full-timers which we did in July of 2011 and we haven't looked back since.

My extracurricular interests included being a Charter member of the South Windsor Ambulance Corps for 10 years. I was an EMT, First Aid / CPR instructor and Secretary.

I was Religious education teacher for 3 years.

I am a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. I was Worthy Grand Matron for the State of Connecticut 1996-1997. I was Grand Treasurer for 12 years. I was on the Board of Directors for 19 years. General Grand Chapter Committee Member for Cancer Research 3 years.

I was an Advisor and Board Member for the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls for 3 years.

I was on the Board of Trustees for Masonicare for 2 years.

And I was chief cook and kitchen wench for my husbands' two Masonic Lodges.

Basically that is why I am your 2nd Vice President because I have a problem saying **NO**.

Love, Laugh, and Keep Rollin

Anne-Marie



Charlie & Sue Schaffer
2013-2014 Charity Committee



Charlie is a retired Podiatrist and Sue a retired RN; we have 3 children and 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. Since retirement from our professions we spent 11 years volunteering in serving the poor of Haiti (a total of 11 trips to that desperately poor country) and founding a nonprofit school in the heart of Appalachia in Eastern Kentucky. Auxier, KY was a coal mining community that was going through tough times when a Catholic priest bought the town school and gave it to us to help low income families. Over a 10 year period it was built up to a large organization whereby we felt it could be given to an international organization to maintain the many programs we developed. Today it prospers and continues to serve Eastern Kentucky. After leaving Kentucky we went full time RVing. We enjoy boon-docking. Our 2 trips with Mexican Connection were a high point of our travels. We continue to serve through the CARE facility in Livingston, TX twice a year. We will leave to work there next week for the month of April, 2013.





2013 San Felipe Rally Charity Report

I am always amazed and humbled at the generosity of our Chapter 8 members. This year was no exception. There was no dearth of deserving charities in the San Felipe area. The evidence was everywhere that they have been hit hard by the lack of tourism. Charlie Boles, our Wagon Master, laid the groundwork in contacting some of the charities and lining up tours. I was pleased at the response we had from members who went with the Charity Committee to interview intended recipients and to see for themselves the needs in the community. I think it was a positive experience for them and they were able to come back and report what they saw, which stimulates interest from members who were hesitant to accompany us. Hopefully, this interest and willingness to get involved will lead them to step forward in the future to help with the Charity Committee on other rallies.

I remember the first time Rusty and I went to visit possible charity recipients during the Guanajuato rally; we thought it might be pretty depressing -- but we came away from that experience thinking the charity events were the most memorable part of the rally. In future years, we thought how depressing it was going to be at the orphanages. Boy, were we wrong! To see how the kids react to the house moms and dads and how happy they were are memories we still hold dear.

The orphanages we visited in San Felipe were no exception. While the two sites were quite different - one being very small with very young children living in a home environment, the other very large and well organized with the kids living in dormitories - you could see the love and joy everywhere.

We also visited Volunteers Without Limits, where they have a thrift store and a food bank. They help severely disabled children and their families (there are few services available for the disabled in Mexico) as well as helping out other charities in the area. If someone comes in who needs clothing, they are given those items. The rest of the donated clothing and household items are sold, which in turn supports the food bank and other services. During 2012, they distributed over 3,000 bags of food (very basic beans, rice, flour, oil and donated canned goods); provided 1,440 bottles of Ensure/Pediasure (for their clients who can't eat solid food); and gave away almost 6,000 diapers. They also provided gas and food for trips to distant doctors or hospitals.

We stumbled across our fourth charity almost by accident. Rafael Navarro, the owner of Pete's Camp, mentioned to Charlie that he was distributing food baskets to 25 families and welcomed anyone who would like to go with him. Rafael has been feeding these families out of his own pocket, occasionally getting donations from people who know what he is doing. He goes out into the poorest of the poor neighborhoods, serving those who cannot get out of their homes nor have no means to get to the store or means to buy food. Again, these food baskets are very basic: rice, beans, flour, and oil.

He goes to these homes every two weeks. Through his efforts, he is helping to expand this program and has brought other volunteers together to go into other neighborhoods. He is also involving high school students, who go out to distribute the baskets as well as clean up the yards and make repairs where possible.



One of his recipients was living in a trench he had dug, under his very weathered boat he was using for a roof. Someone donated an old camper shell, and Rafael asked us for help in getting it on a trailer and moved to the gentleman's site. There was no shortage of helpers from Chapter 8 who showed up to help. Rafael was pretty impressed with our group!

The Charity Committee of Peter and Anne-Marie Arnold, Ed Biller, Frank and Margaret Jenia, Charlie and Sue Schaffer and my humble assistant, Rusty, put our heads together to come up with percentages we could give to these worthy charities; we had to use percentages at this point since we didn't know how much money we would have. Because of the dire needs in San Felipe, the Charity Committee suggested that no money be withheld this year as seed money for next year. We presented our recommendations to the full membership and were given the go ahead.

Most of our in-kind donations were left with Volunteers Without Limits, since they could use the household items and clothing donations both in their thrift store as well as giving items to needy recipients. It seems like all of the charities in San Felipe work well together and support each other in their needs. School supplies were distributed to the schools.

Through registration, matching funds, donations during the rally, and the auctions (which raised \$1,774!), we were able to raise \$6,000. This is pretty impressive for a group our size; give yourselves a pat on the back!

Here is what we ended up being able to leave at our host city:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------|
| Sunshine Hacienda | 10% | \$ 600 |
| Rafael Navarro Food Baskets | 20% | \$1,200 |
| Casa de Fe | 35% | \$2,100 |
| Volunteers Without Limits | 35% | \$2,100 |

While we weren't able to cure the poverty, we did make a difference! As one gentleman said to me, "You can't cover the sun with one finger." I want to thank each and every one of you for the contributions you made. I also encourage you to become involved with the Charity Committee on future rallies; I think you will find it to be a very enriching experience.

Marcy Davidson
Chairman, Charity Committee



HI SKIPS - SKPS ACTIVITIES

It may just be March, but already time to think about spring and summer rallies. We hope as you make plans for your travels, you do consider visiting other SKP Chapters along the way. Each chapter has its own flavor and style, but all welcome guests. Check the rally calendar in each magazine, then be sure to let them know you are coming.

Should you not be traveling great distance, be sure to check your chapter rally schedule. Chapter Rallies are terrific for developing your RV friendships. It is what makes your SKP Family special.

If you are traveling west do consider the WARE (Western Area Rally Escapees) in Lodi, CA - check the website to register at www.skpwarerally@gmail.com April 14-17.

If you are traveling east check out SKP ACRE April 21-28 in Marion, NC - go to the website www.skpacre.com to learn more and to register.

Of course we're going to the 35th Escapade June 30-July 5 in Gillette, WY.

Hope to see you along the way. SKP Hugs Susie & Denny Orr

Report from the Membership Chair:

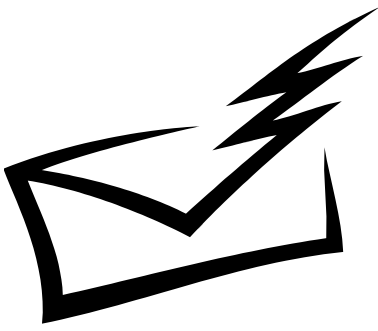
Maryke Hines

Chapter 8 currently has 154 paid-up members, some with membership expiring several years from now! It was nice to see all the SKPs who were on the San Felipe Rally, signing up to be a member of Chapter 8 or renewing their membership for one or more years.

Our total list of members or former members has over 370 names on it. In the next few months I will email all of them and ask them to renew their membership in the Mexican Connection. If not renewing, they will stay on a separate list for the newsletter editor in case information is emailed out which could be of interest to them.

During the year generally a few new members will sign up online and more during the Escapade. This year at the Escapade in Gillette, WY we will be greeting and signing up new members at our table on The Row, and especially during our famous Mexican Fiesta! We have lots of new Chapter 8 membership brochures, so if you are at the Escapade take some and put them in your rig, so you can tell SKPs as well as other RVers you meet on the road about the exciting rally to Ensenada in 2014 and sign them up to become a member of Chapter 8 after they are Escapee RV Club members!





Letters from the membership:

We want to thank Charlie and Dawn for a great rally. We appreciate all your time and energy to put the rally together and keep things going. We could tell you love San Felipe. We had the opportunity to see San Felipe during Carnival and experience the wonderful people. I think we all spent a lot of money on the fresh tamales from the gals who made them and brought them to Pete's Camp. We had some excitement when Ella decided to chase the birds and not come back. Luckily there was a good ending to the story. We enjoyed seeing Raphael show up every day in his ultra light and take people for rides. We were able to meet new and forever friends. Even the dogs had a great time. Pete's Camp is a great place and we loved being on the beach. We just wish the weather had been a little warmer. We did have fun and the time went fast. Before we knew it we were leading a group out to the states.

Hugs to you guys.



Jan and Ed Biller

Note: Thanks to Ed and Jan for all their help!!!

Hola ! Me Llamo es Shelly Dominek



I am the new Chapter 8 – Mexican Connection Newsletter editor.

I volunteered to take over the position during our recent rally to San Felipe, Baja Mexico. The previous editor, Jan Biller, has done a fabulous job in making the assignment easy to assume. I want to take this time to thank her for all her help.

First, let me tell you a little about myself. My husband, Bill, and I are originally from Michigan and have been full-timing for 6 years. Only recently we have discovered the beauty and rv-friendly atmosphere of the southwest. In fact, this is only the third year that we have been fortunate enough to spend the winters in this area. In the past, we have spent our winters in Florida.

Our recent rally to San Felipe was our first trip with the Mexican Connection and our first trip to Mexico. We really enjoyed ourselves and look forward to future trips.

This is your newsletter, so if you have anything that you would like to add to the newsletter or any comments on articles, please send me a note to chapter8.newsletter@yahoo.com.

Gracias



2013 San Felipe Rally



