

# LA CONEXIÓN MEXICANA

## Escapees RV Club Chapter 8

Member of Escapees Social Network, Inc.

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Fall 2017

SIGN UP NOW FOR THE 2018 BAJA RALLY

Volume XXXVIII No. 3



Birdwatcher's Paradise—Avocets in Refugio de Aves (Bird Refuge), Guerrero Negro, B.C.S. Photo by Lin Hines

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**12 PAGE BONUS SECTION—  
2018 BAJA WINE TO WHALES CARAVAN  
FAQS & PROGRAM**

# Chapter 8 Mission Statement

Chapter 8 was organized in 1985 to:

- Expose Escapees Chapter 8 Mexican Connection members to RV travel in Mexico, its traditions, culture, scenery, food, and folklore.
- Travel South of the Border and give back more than the enriching experiences we gain, through charity donations and business patronization.
- Enable Chapter 8 members to feel comfortable to return to Mexico for future Rallies as well as their own road trip adventures.



## *El escritorio del redactor*

**Editor's Desk** by Lin Hines

SEE IT—SHOOT IT —SEND IT—We'd love to publish your photographs related to Chapter 8 Rallies—be sure to ID people and places!

Email to: <Chap8newsletter@gmail.com>



2018 Escapade will be back in Sedalia, MO 27 May to 1 June 2018.

Chapter 8 expects to have a booth on the Row to recruit new mem-

bers. If you're planning to attend and would like to be part of the crew manning our booth, contact President Cynthia Ponder <wagonmasters2017@gmail.com>

Pueblos Mágicos or Magical Towns are designated by Mexico's Secretary of Tourism based on cultural riches, natural beauty or historical relevance. There are 3 Pueblos Mágicos in the whole Baja California peninsula. Tecate in the northern state of Baja California, the border entry point for the 2018 Rally, and Loreto and Todos Santos in the southern Baja state of Baja California Sur. You'll be pleasantly surprised if you visit any of these 3 truly magical towns!

Official Mexican Peso to U.S. Dollar Exchange Rate was 17.75 on 9/23/2017

—**CHAPTER 8 FEBRUARY 2018 BAJA WINE TO WHALES CARAVAN**—

Be sure to check out the 2018 Chapter 8 Baja Wine to Whales Caravan in a special BONUS SECTION following Page 10 of the Chapter News pages! The Bonus Section contains FAQs—Frequently Asked Questions—about the Rally and specific information on the campgrounds, their facilities and all activities planned in each area. It sounds like a really terrific Baja Chapter 8 adventure! We're signed up—are you??

**WINTER ISSUE CH. 8 NEWSLETTER COPY DEADLINE—DEC. 10 FIRM**



Board Photo taken 2/19/2017 Missing Board Member—Orene Brown

*Funcionarios del Capítulo 8  
Escapes Chapter 8 Officers*

President — Jim and Cynthia Ponder wagonmasters2017@gmail.com

Immediate Past President—Orene Brown

1st VP & 2018 Wagonmasters—Ed & Cassandra Dennis wagonmaster2018@gmail.com

2nd VP & 2019 Wagonmaster--**POSITION VACANT--PLEASE VOLUNTEER!**

3rd VP & 2020 Wagonmaster—**POSITION VACANT—PLEASE VOLUNTEER!**

Treasurer—Steve Bufty ch8treasurer@gmail.com

Secretary—Barb Ely barbwely@gmail.com

Membership—Maryke Hines Ch8membership@gmail.com

Webmaster—Kevin Ridley chapter8webmaster@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor — Lin Hines Chap8newsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter Layout/Graphics—Maryke Hines

Historian—**POSITION VACANT—PLEASE VOLUNTEER!**



**Chapter 8 Website: [www.mexicanconnection08.com](http://www.mexicanconnection08.com)**

# Mensaje del Presidente

## A Message from the President



Hola, Mis Amigos, It has been a busy summer for your Chapter 8 officers and Board members in our personal and Mexican Connection lives. I will bring you up to date a bit on Jim and I, after an early spring visit to Texas to see our almost 13-year-old grandson, we decided that we needed to settle down near College Station, where Ryan lives. We found a house in Montgomery, TX near Lake Conroe within easy driving distance of Ryan's home and the two major airports in Houston. We arrived at our new home the same day as Hurricane Harvey, parked the motor home in the driveway and moved in. Having been full-timers, we had only a folding table, a few chairs, and water coming from the sky in abundance.

It's been 3 weeks now, we have met many amazing people who have endured much, lost much, given much to others, and know we have made a good choice where to live for the next few years. We have acquired some furniture like a real bed and spent time with our grandson who has helped us move boxes and get settled ,.

What is going on with Chapter 8??? Registration has begun for the February 2018 Baja Rally and we have had many people already sign up. Our Registration Form is web-based on the Chapter 8 website where you are reading this newsletter. We have changed our webpage from HTML code to Word Press, so that changes are easier. We have entered the modern era of web pages but there is a learning curve for many of us. We ask that you have patience with all of us who are volunteers and busy lives trying to make this go as smoothly as possible for you.

Kevin and Emma Ridley deserve a Gold Medal for bringing our website into the modern era, all while dealing with rig problems, Kevin's full time real job, and young Eloise and Eliza. Thank goodness, he is coaching Jim who is now pitching in to make some improvements to the Registration web page. There have been a few problems with the Registration page. If you need assistance, please email Jim at [jponder70@gmail.com](mailto:jponder70@gmail.com). Kevin is helping still, but will need a replacement as Webmaster next year. Barb Ely, our Secretary extraordinaire is traveling to Australia just before our February Rally. She and John will be joining us for the Pre-Rally in Potrero park but will not be completing the full Rally with us. She also has asked us to find a replacement for her next year. She claims to have the easiest job on the Board!

If you might be interested in either positions, please come prepared to talk with Kevin and Barb at the Pre-Rally so we can have a smooth transition. We do not currently have a Historian, our Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair and Treasurer have been in their positions for several years now. We need people to step up to be trained to take over these roles in the future.

I am fortunate as Cassandra Dennis will automatically become President next year, but we need Wagonmasters for 2019, 2020 and 2021. We need future Wagonmasters to have this much time for planning and thinking about the future Rallies and their locations. Doing it just a few months ahead like we did last year and Cassandra & Ed did this year is a much more difficult task if you don't know the territory well where you wish to take the Rally. It is fun to plan and do a Rally, but it is also much harder work when done over just one year. There is a written and digital guide for all you need to know about planning a Rally and more is added every year. No one has to start without a blueprint of what is important and what needs to be done.

If you have the love of adventure, give traveling in Mexico and planning a Chapter 8 Rally a thought. Contact me at [wagonmasters2017@gmail.com](mailto:wagonmasters2017@gmail.com) if you have any questions about what it is all about. I know Cassandra and Ed will be glad to talk with you on the Rally and in their free time as well. I will be glad to answer any other Chapter 8 questions anyone might have as well or pass them on to those who might have the answers. Looking forward to seeing many of you on our Wine to Whales Rally in February, 2018!

*Cynthia and Jim Ponder*

## Mensaje del Tesorero The Treasurer Speaks!

The Treasurer reports that the 2018 “Wine to Whales” Caravan opened for signups on September 1st and there was a sudden flood of Registrations and PayPal payments. Yes, there were initial problems with the Registration Forms but between our retiring Webmaster Kevin Ridley and Jim Ponder, our “go-to” guy to pick up the slack and fix the problems, we think that we now have a fully functioning Registration Form on the Mexican Connection website. Use this link to get directly to the registration Form — —

<http://mexicanconnection08.com/2018-registration/>

The PayPal side of the signup procedure seems to be working satisfactorily ... just slowly follow the procedure below:

- (1) Read carefully and Fill out the Form,
- (2) Payment entries include (a) Administration Fees per person, (b) Caravan Fee, (c) Optional Tour Fees, (d) Membership Payments ... if due or if you wish to extend, and (e) Optional Charity Donations.
- (3) The latest version of the Form will calculate your Total Payment Due,
- (4) Click on the PayPal Button and complete your payment, and
- (5) Return to the Registration Form which should still be right there on your computer and click on the “Register” Button. Taa! Daa! You’re signed up for the trip of a lifetime! When we visited Scammon’s Lagoon this past year, we had five, yes five, whales at one time alongside our boat begging to be “petted”. An experience not to be forgotten!

*Your Humble Treasurer, Steve Bufty*

## Algunas Palabras en Español

LET’S SPEAK SPANISH!



### English:

*Have a good trip!*

*Welcome*

*A little bit more*

*Thank you — you’re welcome*

*How long?*

### Español:

*¡Buen Viaje!*

*Bienvenidos*

*Un poquito más*

*Gracias — de nada*

*¿Cuánto tiempo?*

## *Miembros del Capítulo*

### *News From Membership Chair Maryke Hines:*

As of September 19 the Mexican Connection has 156 paid-up members. It has been rather slow this summer, but with the registrations for the Rally coming in, we are getting new members and many renewals. Some for several years even!

Welcome to these NEW MEMBERS since the Summer newsletter: Jerry and Lynn Dixon, Robin & Virginia Danby, Kathryn Engle, Joe Larrabee & Kaiya Tway. We hope to see many of the new members and also many "old" ones on the "Wine to Whales Baja Caravan".

All current members receive the Chapter 8 newsletters by email, before the newsletter is published on the Chapter's website. For Membership questions, email me:

<chap8membership@gmail.com> *Maryke Hines*

## *Secretary's Minute—Barb Ely*

We began our travels in May from Congress, AZ going to CA, OR, WA, ID, MT, WY and then back to Congress in Sept. When we first arrived in WA, we were using the heaters in the AM and PM to ward off the chill. After July 4, goodbye heaters, hello AC. WOW - what a warm couple of months! Temps over 100 degrees in Seattle, Olympia - who woulda thunk it?!?! We visited a friend in Birch Bay, WA and made our way to Vancouver, BC for a couple of days—delightful places to visit. In August, we headed to Casper, WY for the eclipse; sky was clear and it was an awesome experience! Due to all the wildfires in the Northwest, the air quality was pretty horrible on the trip to WY—such terrible destruction from the wildfires to all that beautiful scenery and personal property. Then returning to AZ, we hear the news of the devastating hurricanes in TX, then FL and other southern states. Our hearts go out to all those who suffered from these disasters, and praise to the emergency personnel who have really been put to the test this summer. Now we are back in CA, bags are packed, Australia here we come, departing San Francisco Sept. 28, returning in January 2018. Happy Holidays all!!

By the way, Chapter 8 will be looking for a replacement Secretary in February. I will be at the pre-rally at Potrero Park but will not be going on the rest of the adventure in MX. The role of Secretary is not difficult; the benefits are many—meeting lots of terrific people, assisting wherever possible to make the Rally a great one, working with the Charity group. The Secretary is responsible for the Board meeting minutes at the pre-and-post Rally plus the General Meeting and then emailing these minutes to the rest of the Board and copies to Escapees HQ in Livingston. If you are interested, please contact me or a member of the Board.

*Barb Ely* barbwely@gmail.com



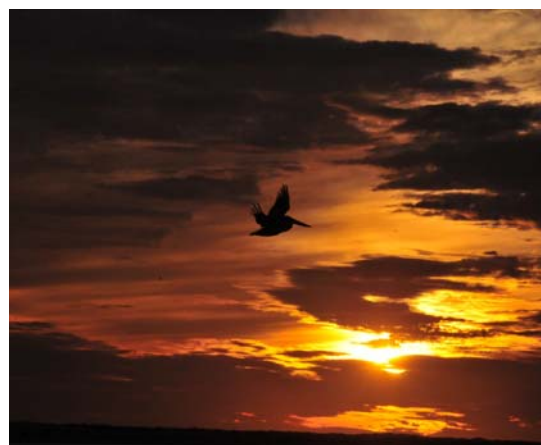
*Mensaje del Segundo Vice Presidente  
y organizador de la 2019 Reunión  
Second VP & 2019 Wagonmaster*

**This Space currently VACANT since we had no volunteers/nominees for 2nd VP or 3rd VP at the 2017 San Felipe Rally. If you're interested in being Wagonmaster in 2019 or 2020 and taking Chapter 8 members to your favorite place in Mexico, please contact Chapter 8 President Cynthia Ponder! We will all be thrilled to welcome you aboard and give you all the help you need for success!**



**Chapter 8 Rallies are  
powered by Volunteers!**

We need future Wagonmasters, a Secretary and a Webmaster to continue developing our new Word press-based Website. Please contact any Board member listed on Page 3 to throw your hat in the ring! Training will be gladly provided by experienced members! Bring your creative ideas and come join us!



**EVERYBODY NEEDS A GOOD TACO!!**

**Do you like RVing, Mexico and History??**

If you do, you'll make a perfect Chapter 8 Historian! The Historian collects Rally materials, Board and General meeting minutes, newsletters and Rally photographs and adds them to our recently created Chapter 8 digital history files. Ed Overby, the outgoing Historian, has done a great job digitizing all available records from the Chapter's 36 year history! We're looking for a computer literate member dedicated to maintaining and adding annually to this growing digital archive, that is an important research tool for Wagonmasters planning their Rallies. You'll be working with the Webmaster to archive much of this material for the future. If this position sounds interesting, please contact President Cynthia Ponder at <wagonmasters2017@gmail.com>

*Mensaje de la Directora de los Capítulos de los Escapees  
Message from Escapees Inc. Chapter/BOF Director*



Hola, Mexican Connection and Happy Autumn to you all.

My husband and I have just returned from the ravaged areas left behind by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma where we were called to assist in securing medical facilities.

While there, we were sent messages by so many concerned with our safety based on the news reports apparently airing on all the networks, and we appreciated the love and care of those worried about us. However, I want to say that the good people of the world far outnumber the bad, and each day we were amazed at all the outpouring of love shown toward both the people affected and those there to help.

Each day I was reminded just how fortunate we are for what we have and all the friends that surround us. That includes our Escapees family that I know we can reach out to in times of trouble. I am grateful for each of you and I won't wait for the carving of the turkey to say thanks for all that you are and do!

*Love and blessings,  
Lockie Sailer*

Chapter/BOF Director  
Escapees RV Club  
870-754-1263

[www.escapees.com/fun/chapters](http://www.escapees.com/fun/chapters)



*Baby Grey Whale on its mother next to our panga! Guerrero Negro 2016 by Lin Hines*

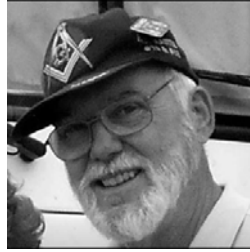
**Get ready for some great WHALEWATCHING on the 2018 Rally!** Guerrero Negro and Scammon's Lagoon is the place in the middle of Baja! Will you get to touch and maybe kiss a very friendly baby Grey Whale? Come along on the 2018 Rally and find out!! It's truly an amazing experience that you'll never forget!







## IN MEMORIAM—PETER ARNOLD



Peter Arnold, Chapter 8 Wagonmaster for the 2015 Kino Bay, Sonora Rally passed away in early September. He was surrounded by the love of his life of 52 years, his wife Anne-Marie Arnold and his children. Peter had a difficult year with chronic congestive heart and liver issues. A memorial service was held on Tuesday, September 19th at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Windsor, CT.

*(Editors note-thanks to Ellie Dotson for spotting this on the Escapees Boomer site.)*

### 2018 CARNAVAL IN ENSENADA —FEBRUARY 8-13, 2018



The 2018 Baja Wine to Whales Rally will have a chance to see Ensenada's big Carnaval Celebration and at least one parade. The floats, color, enthusiasm is really spectacular!

### Días Feriados / Mexican National Holidays/Observances—Fall/Winter

Oct. 12 Día de La Raza—Columbus Day—Discovery of the New World by Columbus

Nov. 2 Día de los Muertos—Mexico's Day of the Dead—Public Holiday

Nov. 20 Día de la Revolución—Revolution Day—1910 Revolución started--National Holiday

Dec. 12—Día de la Virgen Guadalupe—Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego

Dec. 24—Noche Buena—Christmas Eve

Dec. 25—Día de Natividad—Christmas Day—National Holiday

Dec. 28—Día de los Santos Inocentes—Innocent Saints Day—practical jokes day in Mexico!

Dec. 31—New Year's Eve—many celebrations in town squares!

# Chapter 8 Mexico Charity Program



*Part of Charity Committee visiting CAM Handicapped Children's School in San Felipe 2/14/2017. The school's cooking class made us Valentine cupcakes! School principal on left. We allocated money to repair the school's small bus so more handicapped children could be brought to the school and benefit from their educational classes and vocational programs.*

## CHAPTER 8 RALLY CHARITY PROGRAM—A LITTLE BACKGROUND

by Lin and Maryke Hines SKP# 70910

One of the most important and satisfying missions of Chapter 8—The Mexican Connection—is the charity donations in U.S. dollars and in-kind that we give the Mexican people in the areas of each of our annual Rallies. Over the years, we have supported schools, orphanages, old people's homes, kid's sports organizations, handicapped children's schools, health clinics, Cruz Roja/Mexican Red Cross, children's feeding programs and other worthwhile institutions.

All Rally participants are asked to bring in-kind charity items that are always in demand at any location: school supplies (binder paper, computer paper reams, rulers, pencils etc), toys for all age children, sporting goods (soccer balls, basketballs etc), usable laptop computers, new or used clothing in good condition especially for babies, children, teens and also for adults, basic beauty and health care products (soap, skin crème, shampoo, toothbrushes & toothpaste), baby and adult diapers, sewing machines & supplies. Nights can be chilly anywhere in Mexico and sweaters, jackets and blankets are always needed. Foods like peanut butter, cereals, bags of rice and beans and canned goods are always welcome. Eyeglasses and hearing aids in good condition are great too. We make sure that all the in-kind donations go to worthy places that can distribute them to truly needy people. **Please do NOT bring old and useless items—especially old worn out clothing.**

The Charity Committee makes sure that all monies are efficiently used in the local community. We invite Rally participants to go along with the Charity Committee as they make their visits to assess worthwhile organizations—it can be an eye-opening experience! Remember, as our late member Roger McFillen always said: *"It's for the kids!"* Chapter 8's Charity program is one of the most heartwarming parts of our Mexico Rally experience!



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

FAQs: Hook-Ups, Distances, CB Radios



*You're just in time...*

## Wine to Whales Baja Caravan

*This Pacific Ocean Beachfront is waiting for you...*

*We are excited...*



to have so many wonderful people from the USA and Canada joining Chapter 8's Wine to Whales Baja Caravan since registration began. The blend of Mexican Connection regulars and new Chapter 8 members bodes well for this 21-day February 2018 adventure. We have received great questions from many of you and they deserve meaningful answers. So we have included this FAQ Section, Campground Guides to our six Caravan venues... plus some suggestions for your return trip. Fortunately, we also have a few slots available for those who have been waiting for more details about events, hook-ups, laundry, showers, travel distances, Top Tier gasoline & ULSD (Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel) availability! Let's start with FAQs.

### FAQ: What hook-ups will be available at each Campground?

Each Campground has a page in the Campground Guide below. Hook-ups, Dump Stations, Restrooms, Showers and Dry Camping issues are covered for each Campground. Either 15 amp or 30 amp electricity will be available for all but six nights. Please see Campground Guides for more detail. Water is available at four of the six camping venues. Reverse Osmosis water for drinking can be inexpensively purchased in larger cities like Tecate, Ensenada, San Quintin, and Guerrero Negro.

### FAQ: How far are the distances to border crossing and between Campgrounds?

7.3 mi/ 12 km	Potrero County Park (USA) to Tecate Border Crossing.
44.7 mi/ 72 km	Tecate Border Crossing to Zoologico Parque del Nino (Valle de Guadalupe).
42.9 mi/ 69 km	Zoologico Parque del Nino (Valle de Guadalupe) to La Jolla Beach Camp (Ensenada).
120.5 mi/194 km	La Jolla Beach Camp (Ensenada) to Molino Viejo (San Quintin).
115.6 mi/186 km	Molino Viejo (San Quintin) to Rancho Santa Ines (Catavina).
148.5 mi/239 km	<u>Rancho Santa Ines (Catavina) to Guerrero Negro (Baja California Sur/BCS).</u>
479.5 mi/772 km	Potrero County Park (USA) to Guerrero Negro (Baja California Sur/BCS)

### FAQ: Why is a CB Radio with external antenna required on the Caravan?

The Caravan travels in Groups of 6-8 rigs. Each Group has a Group Leader in front and a Tail Gunner in the rear should any rig have difficulty. Posted speed limits are strictly observed. Cell phones in Baja are not reliable and hand held CBs or walkie talkies do not have sufficient range to relay communications of traffic light delays, road hazards or info updates. A CB Radio with external antenna is a must!



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

## FAQs: Dry Camping & Charity Participation



### FAQ: Where can I find more information about Mexican RV travel?

The Chapter 8 website, [mexicanconnection08.com](http://mexicanconnection08.com), has an extensive library of Mexican RV travel topics compiled over many years. Detailed information about Mexican insurance, driving tips, charity, and more can be found along with the Chapter 8 mission statement.

### FAQ: How much "Dry Camping" will there be on the Caravan?

We had many questions regarding this topic. While far more Mexican campers use tents rather than recreational vehicles... many of the best venues to explore do not have campgrounds set up for the kind of hook-up dependent rigs that Chapter 8 members enjoy. Although dry camping in Baja is a fact of life that must be dealt with, our Caravan has been designed to minimize inconvenience. The campgrounds where we will spend most time have solutions to the water, sewer and electric needs of modern RVs. Clearly, those who have solar cells or a generator have a great advantage along this part of the route. There will be quiet times from 10pm to 7am each night when generators are not allowed.

There are conveniences, for example the first campground (2-4 nights) has 30amp with water at each site and the last campground (4 nights) has full hook-ups (15-30amp) with. See the comprehensive Campground Guide at the end of the FAQ sections for more detailed info on such availabilities in each campground.

### FAQ: How can I participate in Charity?

SKPs that sign up for the Wine to Whales Baja Caravan have a space on the Registration Form to add a donation to the Charity Fund. Those on the Caravan will be able to bring food or other items for direct donations to Charity recipient organizations or for the Charity Auction. There will be a list of needed Charity Donation Items in the December Newsletter for everyone who would like to donate... whether registered or not for the Wine to Whales Baja Caravan.

The Charity Committee invites recognized local organizations in need of food, supplies and/or funds to present their needs to the Caravan. Caravanners are encouraged to attend these community meetings and visits. These visits provide a look behind the scenes tourists seldom see. It helps you understand how another culture deals with the challenges of poverty, deaf children, orphans, seasonal farm workers, elderly, etc. and what solutions Mexico has found to cope with these universal situations.

During the Caravan, 50-50 tickets will be sold for drawings to be held at the end of the Caravan in which half of the money goes to lucky winners and the other half goes into the Caravan Mexican Charity Fund. At La Jolla Beach Camp, just south of Ensenada, we have our Chapter 8 Fiesta followed by the ever popular Silent Auction followed by the fun-filled Charity Auction with its lively Auctioneers. The items auctioned are usable items donated by SKPs... particularly Caravan participants! It's all to raise money for the Charity Fund that mostly goes to helping underprivileged kids have an opportunity to build a better life. For many the most fun is taking part by bidding on auction items... accompanied with a traditional fundraising margarita! Taking part in the charity functions is both educational and fun!



50/50 Drawing



Unloading Donated Supplies



Charity Auction Action



Handicapped Kids Count!



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018



## FAQs: Shopping, Travel Group Size, Pace & ULSD Availability

### FAQ: Is Carnaval Ensenada as wild as Mardi Gras in New Orleans?

Although they celebrate the same pre-Lenten "Fat Tuesday," Carnaval Ensenada, is the third largest Carnaval in Mexico and a much more easy going, family friendly celebration with a plethora of colorful "home grown" floats with enthusiastic riders pulled by pickups or tractors. Music is abundant in the parades and on large sound stages on both sides of the street. A wide variety of traditional Mexican food and drink are everywhere. Everyone entering the Carnaval area passes through a friendly police check-point, the admission is free and the crowds are generally happy, welcoming and very well behaved.

### FAQ: Where can we buy groceries and supermarket items for our RV in Mexico?

In Mexico a supermarket is called a supermercado... and they can be big, clean, well lit and full of all kinds of things... very much like the ones you shop at home. In the larger cities you will find Smart & Final, Walmart and Costco. Smaller towns, like Tecate, have interesting Bazaars that are a maze of small shops and a bewildering array of items for sale. The Baja Peninsula has many seaside communities where fresh caught fish & shrimp are plentiful and bargain priced. San Quintin is a major producer of familiar brands of fresh fruits and vegetables that are shipped to markets across the USA.

### FAQ: How large is my travel group and how fast is the pace?

Travel Groups will be organized upon arrival in Potrero County Park. Each group will consist of 6-8 rigs and have a Group Leader in front and a Tail Gunner in the rear. As always road conditions and the "slowest driver" will determine the safe speed of the group. Of course, since we all have "foreign" license plates, the pace should not exceed posted speed limits.

If a rig is caught at a traffic light, the driver or passenger should alert the Group Leader by CB and the Group Leader will pause the group until the group is together again. Stops will also be made for lunch and potty breaks as necessary.

Travel Groups are kept small. Enough room is maintained between rigs to enable faster Mexican drivers to pass safely. It is a Mexican custom to signal the driver behind when it is safe to pass by turning on the left blinker. While it is a friendly gesture and helpful... it can be confused as a left turn signal!

### FAQ: Is Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel available in Baja?

The chart on the right illustrates the types of fuel sold in Mexico by PEMEX. Only fuels marked in **DARK GREEN** are recommended for late model gasoline and diesel engines. For diesels made in 2007 or later bring sufficient DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid) for your entire trip since it is harder to find in Baja California.

Baja California (Norte) PEMEX stations sell USA refined Ultra Low Sulfur (Called UBA/DUBA or Ultra Bajo Asufre in Mexico) fuels but are forbidden by PEMEX to disclose this information until all PEMEX stations in Mexico sell ULSD. For example, Baja California Sur does NOT have ULSD since it is supplied by barge from unimproved refineries in mainland Mexico.



<u>Ultra Low Sulfur Gasoline</u>	PEMEX UBA Premium
Regular Gasoline	PEMEX Magna
Regular Diesel	PEMEX Diesel
Low Sulfur Diesel	PEMEX MAG Diesel
<u>Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel</u>	PEMEX UBA Diesel
Marine Diesel	PEMEX MARINA Diesel

Recommended fuel stops include: Tecate, USA fill up. PEMEX, Ensenada, 43mi south of Tecate. PEMEX San Quintin, 121mi south of Ensenada. PEMEX Villa Jesus Maria, 240mi south of San Quintin and 25mi north of Guerrero Negro.

The billboard on left illustrates Mexico's change to PEMEX alternatives for DUBA/ULSD. However, what fuel goes in the tank is the responsibility of the driver. A more complete fuel report is on the next page.



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018



## FAQ: Future of Fuel in Mexico & A Baja State of Mind

### FAQ: What is the future ULSD fuel availability in Baja?

There is Better News, Great News and Excellent News on the Mexican Fuel Front! The Excellent News is about the FUTURE... PEMEX "expects" that all PEMEX stations will have Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel by the end of 2018. The Great News is that FUTURE American Brand gas stations are coming to Mexico. Petroleos Mexicano (PEMEX) has made agreements with Shell, Chevron, Tesoro and other American firms to supply American made fuels, transport them in Mexican pipelines and store them in Mexican "tank farms" like the one in Ensenada. In fact, the first ARCO station in Baja California is already open for business in Tijuana... and more will follow now that ARCO's parent company is authorized to pipe its diesel and gasoline to the storage facilities in Ensenada.

The Better News is NOW Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel & Gasoline is available in Baja California (Norte)! PEMEX has released a list of 3,200 PEMEX stations that sell Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) in Mexico... and about 10% of them are located in Baja California (Norte) and 69 are along Chapter 8's Caravan route. Your Wagonmasters have a coach and toad that are both powered by diesel engines that require ULSD fuel... so we have a personal interest as well as a deep and abiding concern for our fellow travelers.

Since 1938, there has been only one fuel provider in Mexico... the state owned Petroleos Mexicano better known as PEMEX. Official PEMEX stations are operated by private individuals and companies that are restricted to selling PEMEX products. PEMEX became the "cash cow" that funded various social reforms. But "fossil fuels" are found in limited pockets... and the wells of PEMEX are pumping less oil than an expanding Mexican economy needs... so Mexico has voted in constitutional reforms to allow foreign interests to invest in all facets of discovery, production, refining and distribution of petroleum products. And that bodes well for ULSD availability for Mexican Connection caravans for many years to come. Unfortunately, deregulation also means an end to subsidized fuel prices resulting in significantly higher Mexican fuel prices which is a financial hardship for many Mexicanos... which resulted in protest demonstrations earlier in 2017.

The northwestern Mexican States of Baja California and Sonora are the farthest from PEMEX refineries and, therefore, they increasingly have been supplied by fuels refined in the U.S. Mexican trucks transporting products to and from the U.S. are required to use ULSD fuel... and so it is available along major Mexican truck routes in the Mexican mainland. The low population and remoteness of Baja California Sur (from Guerrero Negro to Cabo San Lucas) marks it as one of the areas in which ULSD is generally not available to the best of our knowledge.

We have it on good authority that official PEMEX manifests note the diesel is ULSD to certain PEMEX stations. Nevertheless, no one can guarantee that a given batch of diesel is ULSD without actually testing that batch... so each vehicle operator is responsible for the fuel put in his/her tank.

### FAQ: How can a "Baja Newbie" prepare for the Baja experience?

Organizing a Caravan so many months ahead in Baja will surely lead to some surprises when February 2018 rolls around. As many seasoned Baja travelers realize, in Baja it is more about going with the flow than maintaining a rigid schedule. We began our itinerary planning trips to Baja in February of 2017... and will make our final inspection of the Caravan route in December. We will communicate any necessary changes from this last scouting trip directly to participants via email before start of Caravan. Rest assured that everyone on the Chapter 8 Executive Board is dedicated to making this Baja Caravan a lifetime quality adventure for you. As you arrive in Potrero County Park, please bring an open mind, a willing spirit to pitch-in and help fellow Caravanners as needed.

The secret to Happy Trails in Mexico is having a flexible, uplifting attitude and a reasonable expectation that a good time can be had by all who do!



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

## The Mexican Connection: Camping Guide



**Overview:** Our Wine to Whales adventure covers 480mi or 768km (one way) into the Northern state of Baja California (BC) over 21 days. From there, you can join with other Caravan participants to explore more of Baja or head back to the good old U.S.A. The numbered circles in **RED** on the map indicate the overnight camping along the Caravan route.

- ① Caravan Begins at Potrero Park
- ① to ② 52mi to Zoologico Parque
- ② to ③ 43mi to La Jolla Beach Camp
- ③ to ④ 121mi to Molino Viejo
- ④ to ⑤ 116mi to Rancho Santa Ynez
- ⑤ to ⑥ 149mi to Guerrero Negro



**Wine, Whales, Shopping & Carnaval are all part of the Caravan experience!**





# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

FYI: As Our Caravan Ends, Your Mexican Adventure Continues...



Guerrero Negro

## FAQ: What do I do after Guerrero Negro?

There is more Baja to explore than our Wine to Whales Caravan could cover. So now it is time to personalize your Baja experience by choosing to go on to explore the southern half of Baja or picking a scenic route home. For 36 years, Chapter 8 rallies have ended in Mexico in order for newcomers to practice their newfound international travel skills.

At Mario's RV Park in Guerrero Negro, sign up sheets will be posted so that like minded travelers can join with others to travel together to places of mutual interest.

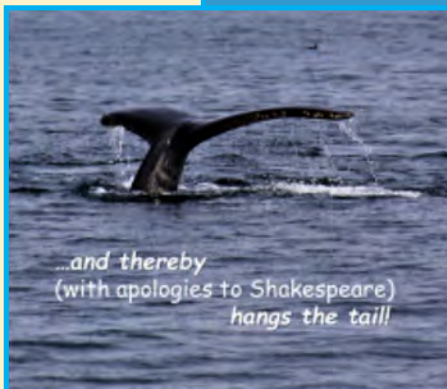
At this time, those who drive diesel powered rigs using ULSD and desiring to travel further south should check to see if it is available in Baja California Sur. The southernmost Pemex station now selling ULSD is in Villa Jesus Maria 25 miles north of Guerrero Negro.

Once you reach Guerrero Negro, you have another 500 plus miles to go before reaching Cabo San Lucas at the tip of the Baja peninsula. Those who have made the trip curse the pot-holes but speak glowingly of the adventure, scenery and Baja Sur hospitality.

There are also many interesting venues to visit along both sides of the Baja Peninsula while driving toward Border Crossings at Tijuana, Tecate or Mexicali.

Venues like Bahia de Los Angeles (to swim with the whale sharks), Rosarito (to dine at El Nido) or San Quintin (Best Baja Sport Fishing). Baja Sur is famous for prehistoric cave paintings, desert four-wheeling and the exquisite joys of sampling the many flavors at taco stands and restaurants along the way.

Clearly, the Mexican economy is changing and the middle class is growing. While prices are rising making Mexican travel not as cheap as it used to be, change will help our members enjoy better travel for years to come!



...and thereby  
(with apologies to Shakespeare)  
hangs the tail



Happy Mexican Trails...  
Kassandra & Ed Dennis  
Wagonmaster2018@gmail.com





# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

Campground #1: Potrero Regional Park, San Diego County



## Campground

Potrero County Park

Venue: Near Tecate, Mexico

Stay: 2-4 nights

Electric at site: 30 amp

Water at site: Potable

Sewer: Nice Dump Station

Rest Rooms: Clean

Showers: Hot

Dry Camp: Optional

## Events

1. Special Volunteer Orientations
2. Caravan Group Orientations
3. Carpool to Tecate (Mexico) to get pesos, FMM tourist cards, try a signature Taco and sample the famous Tecate beer for lunch with your Travel Group.



Outdoor & Indoor Meeting Places at Potrero County Park



Tecate Border Crossing & City Park



After getting pesos and Mexican travel documents, there is an opportunity to try a taco for lunch with your travel group if you wish. Perhaps, even a namesake Tecate beer.





# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018



Camp #2: Zoologico Parque del Nino Jersey, Valle de Guadalupe



## Campground

Zoologico Parque del Niño Jersey

Venue: Valle de Guadalupe

Stay: 2 nights

Dry Camp: in level parking lot

Electric: none

Water: none

Sewer: none

Restrooms: none

Showers: none

## Events

1. Winery Tour & VIP Tasting
2. Free time to explore Mexico's Wine Museum, wineries and boutique breweries.
3. Zoo Breakfast & Park Tour



The central location of the picturesque theme park, Zoologico Parque del Niño, allows our Caravan parking area easy access to explore the surrounding wine country... like the Museo de Vino (wine museum) pictured on right.



Making wine began in Georgia in what is now part of Russia. Viniculture spread to what is today modern Turkey and ancient Phoenicia. From Phoenician traders, the art of viniculture became rooted in what is now Spain and France. Catholic priests brought vine cuttings from Spain & France along with knowledge of viniculture to the New World. 90% of Mexican wine is produced in Valle de Guadalupe.



Wine tour, tapas & tasting included



Optional dining near Campground



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

## Camp #3: La Jolla Beach Camp, Ensenada, Mexico



### Campground La Jolla Beach Camp

**Venue:** Ensenada

**Stay:** 8 nights

**Dry Camp:** Pacific beachfront

**Electric:** 15amp NON-beachfront

**Water:** centrally located

**Sewer:** Dump station, Pump Out & Water Fill available

**Restrooms:** Several (basic)

**Showers:** Hot & Cold (basic)

### Events

1. Ocean beach fun & games
2. Carnaval Ensenada (Mardi Gras)
3. Optional Events & Tours
4. La Bufadora (Blowhole)
5. Chapter 8 Fiesta, Auction and Entertainment



- 1 La Jolla Fiesta Patio & Meeting Room
- 2 100 seat Theater
- 3 Ensenada Carnaval Parade
- 4 Cruise Ship in Port Ensenada
- 5 La Bufadora (Blowhole)
- 6 Ensenada Shopping District
- 7 Find a thermal under the sand and dig your own "hot tub"





# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018



Camp #4: Molino Viejo, San Quintin, Mexico

## Campground

### Molino Viejo Restaurant & Bar

**Venue:** San Quintin

**Stay:** 3 nights

**Dry Camp:** Scenic Bayfront

**Electric:** none

**Water:** none

**Sewer:** Opt. dump/water nearby

**Restrooms:** Yes, excellent

**Showers:** none

## Events

1. Fine dinner & drink
2. Caravan Relaxation Room
3. Charity Evaluation
4. Beautiful ocean beaches nearby
5. Optional sports fishing
6. Laundry, markets & museums in San Quintin.



Molino Viejo is a fine restaurant. Our adjacent landscaped camping area is on the bay and near ocean sand beaches. Tourists come from far and wide for the best sports fishing area of the Baja Peninsula.



Seasonal migrant worker families picking fruit & vegetables in San Quintin destined for U.S. markets.



# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

Camp #5: Rancho Santa Ines, Catavina, Mexico



## Campground

### Rancho Santa Ynez (Ines)

**Venue:** Catavina

**Stay:** 2 nights

**Dry Camp:** Only option

**Electric:** no hook-up

**Water:** yes, one central spigot

**Sewer:** none

**Restrooms:** yes (primitive)

**Showers:** none

## Activities

1. Boondocker's Desert Camp
2. Authentic Mexican Dinner
3. Photographer's paradise
4. Nearby upscale desert oasis hotel/restaurant/bar
5. Boojum trees & boulder fields
3. Optional petroglyph tour guide



Catavina Road to Rancho Santa Ines Campground



Rancho Santa Ines is a rustic example of warm Mexican hospitality and hearty country cooking. This protected area has giant cacti, Catavina boulder fields and exotic Boojum trees.





# Wine to Whales Baja Caravan 2018

## Camp #6: Mario's RV Park, Guerrero Negro, Mexico



### Campground

#### Mario's Tours & RV Resort

**Venue:** Guerrero Negro

**Stay:** 4 nights, Full Hook-Up

**Electric:** 15amp & 30amp

**Water at site:** yes

**Sewer at site:** Yes

**Restrooms:** Yes

**Showers:** Yes

### Events

1. Mario's Whale Talk Happy Hour
2. Prime Gray Whale Watching
3. World's Largest Salt Tour
3. Chapter 8 Annual Meeting
4. Farewell Buffet dinner
5. Choose your group to go south to Baja Sur or take a scenic route home with new friends.



After a long day on the road, with occasional speed bumps/tope, we reach Mario's just in time for Happy Hour. The next day begins with Whale & Salt Tours. Enjoy Farewell Dinner with newfound friends!

