

LA CONEXIÓN MEXICANA



Escapees RV Club Chapter 8

Member of Escapees Social Network, Inc.

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Spring 2017

2017 San Felipe Rally Wrapup

Volume XXXVIII No.1



Pink Sunrise at the Beach, Pete's Camp, San Felipe, Baja CA—2017 Chapter 8 Rally— Photograph by Lin Hines

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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

This issue is the Annual Rally Wrapup Issue featuring the 2017 San Felipe Rally with many photos of our activities, Pete's Camp, the cooking classes, people, meeting, food, charity & the beauty of San Felipe. Thanks to everybody that sent photographs--we included as many as possible!



Maryke and I had a great time at the San Felipe Rally! We always enjoy the town of San Felipe and even stayed an extra week with friends that live in El Dorado Ranch across from Pete's Camp. We got to see an exciting and very colorful Carnival parade! Fun! Back in the U.S., we went to FMCA in Chandler, AZ, took an 8 day drive to 11 National Parks plus Monument Valley Navajo Nation Park, then down to Tucson for an enjoyable Escapade, followed by a week in Mesa with the Escapee Genies at the LDS Family History Library and then home to the rainy Northwest! Had a great sun break for nearly 2-1/2 months!

—CHAPTER 8 FEBRUARY 2018 BAJA WINE TO WHALES CARAVAN—

Be sure to check out the preliminary details of the 2018 Chapter 8 Rally —the Baja Wine to Whales Caravan on pg.5-7! It sounds like a terrific adventure! I'm ready to sign up & go!

Official Mexican Peso to U.S. Dollar Exchange Rate was **18.78** on **4/25/2017**

Your Summer 2017 Newsletter will have photos from the Flan Class in San Felipe and the Flan a la Pete's Camp recipe! Also expect more photos of our members & Rally activities!

SUMMER ISSUE CHAPTER 8 NEWSLETTER COPY DEADLINE—JUNE 25.



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

Secretary—Barb Ely

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

Mensaje del Presidente

A Message from the President



We held our first new Board meeting at the end of the San Felipe Rally in order for all new and old Board members to meet and discuss needs of Chapter 8 for the coming year. Our biggest goal is to support our new Wagonmasters in planning a successful Rally in 2018. The choice of the Ensenada area with the inclusion of Baja's Guadalupe Valley wine country and perhaps going as far south as Guerrero Negro was discussed. ULSD fuel and travel times will be checked on 2018 Wagonmasters Ed and Cassandra scouting.

A big project this year is a major update to our Chapter 8 website. The content will be expanded and will be in a more user-friendly format. Kevin Ridley is our new Webmaster with Ken Wadland offering able back up assistance. The goal is to have a truly web based Rally registration and membership form available in the future, where members might upload photos and information, possibly a forum on travel in Mexico, plus more information on current and upcoming Rallies. (See Kevin's article on page 16). Kevin welcomes your input on what would make our website more helpful to you.

I will continue to monitor the website email for this year and then pass that job along to the 2018 President so that the person answering questions about Chapter 8 has some good experience about Chapter 8 and our Rallies.

The need to have an active presence at the Tucson Escapade was discussed and we were well represented on the Row by our representatives in March. We acquired new members, got many people talking about travel in Mexico, and our "Fiesta" social was very well attended. Ed presented a San Felipe Rally slide show along with a preview of their 2018 Ensenada area Rally. Jim and I gave a seminar on Travel in Mexico again this year which was also well attended and we gave out copies of slightly updated "RV Travel in Mexico FAQ" handout, which will also appear on our new website.

In the future, we need members attending the East and West coast Escapades who would be willing to represent Chapter 8 on the Row. Let me know if you want to work the Row at the Sedalia Escapade May 27-June 1, 2018.

Please feel free to contact Jim and me at any time if you have questions or concerns about Chapter 8. We'll keep the wagonmasters2017@gmail.com email address active along with a new President's email on the new website in the near future. Thank You to all who have supported us in the past 2 years at Escapades, on the Row, in Chapter 8 and seminars as we tell others about traveling in Mexico.

Cynthia Ponder

The Mexican Connection Wines to Whales Caravan February 4-25, 2018



Hola Mexican Connection Amigos...

Our attraction packed, event driven, charity laced Caravan to Baja California is shaping up to be an adventure worth far more than its SKP price!

Kassandra & Ed Dennis, Wagonmasters 2018



The 2018 Caravan is a "Rolling Rally" filled with multiple venues, fascinating tours, select wine tasting opportunities, Mexican Connection Happy Hour camaraderie, dramatic geologic panoramas, bizarre trees, giant cacti that have lived over 2,000 years, picturesque ocean beaches, Mexican Connection mini-fiestas, bizarre trees and constantly changing geology along our Caravan route.

Our first stop is in the heart of the wine country, then Ensenada just in time for the parades, celebration and excitement of Carnaval... and finally reach Guerrero Negro just in time for the height of gray whale activity featuring the world's greatest concentration of gray whales and their calves in nearby Ojo de Liebre Lagoon.

The Caravan provides an opportunity to travel safely with old and new SKP friends to some of the most beautiful places in Baja California, Mexico, to learn about the warm hearted friendly people, their culture and customs. In the tradition of Chapter 8, our Caravan will not only hit the tourist highlights but will take you behind the "Gringo Scene" to savor the real Mexico.



Our next stop will be in the vicinity of the deep-water port of Ensenada, a favorite port of major cruise lines. We will arrive in time to enjoy the third largest Carnival (Mardi Gras) in Mexico. The Ensenada City Tour includes the many landmarks like the Fish Market that has kept Ensenada an ever-popular cruise ship and tour bus destination.

The 2018 Wines to Whales Caravan begins on the U.S. side of the border where we will gather at the beautiful Potrero Regional Park in Potrero California, just north of the safe and tranquil border crossing at Tecate, Baja California, Mexico.



Upon crossing the border we will head for an exotic dry camping opportunity in the heart of the Valle Guadalupe where 90% of Mexican wines are created. There will be ample opportunity for the tours, tastings, the Wine Museum and exceptional dining in an area said to be the future "Napa Valley" of Mexico.

Mother Nature's dancing waters... "La Bufadora" where huge ocean waves hit a unique cliff formation throwing massive salt water sprays high overhead.



It is also the site of a thriving tourist marketplace and an several mariscos restaurants serving fresh seafood. The road to La Bufadora is dotted with street vendors and small shops and offers many scenic ocean views. Be sure to go up the stairs and watch from the ledge above the main view area.





Midway between Ensenada and La Bufadora is the friendly oceanside community and relaxed resort known as La Jolla Beach Camp. This ocean beach has a hidden asset. Beneath the beach are hot springs waiting to be uncovered. Visitors dig shallow holes in the sandy beach and hot water bubbles up to make a natural "hot tub." We have reserved every La Jolla RV site for our Caravan. There is much more to learn about this unique venue... so be sure to check it out the details that will be in the next



This year's caravan is longer than those of recent years, with more to see and do along the way. Just like last year's event this will be a mostly dry camping adventure and a great opportunity to learn more about dry camping from seasoned SKP's. Travelling between towns in Baja usually results in areas of little or no coverage. Therefore it is the policy of the Mexican Connection to have a CB Radio with an outside antenna to have the range needed to stay in communication.

This is at least a four week trip: A three week Caravan and at least one week to return to the U.S.A. Emergency medical facilities and pharmacies are available in most larger towns. You will find familiar products at Costco and Walmart. It's great to try shopping at a local supermarket.

Charity is uniquely part of Chapter 8's purpose in Mexico... and a reason our annual event is so well respected by the local residents at every stop along the way. Any member of the Caravan can come along with the Charity Committee to visit local organizations that need a helping hand. SKP volunteers bring items to donate to the always hilarious charity auction or help distribute donated items to local charity organizations... and know firsthand the empowering feeling of providing a pathway for people to rise above their current condition.



This number of venues and the 21 day length of this Caravan requires volunteer Group Leaders and Tail Gunners at every turn. The 2018 Parking Team will be at the forefront of every venue change. Group Leaders will have an expanded role in making this Caravan successful and fun! Volunteers make it possible to see and do more things for a fraction of the cost of commercial tours! Usually, almost half the Caravan will be seasoned Mexican Connection travelers and the rest will be newbies. Helping SKPs cross the border confidently is what Chapter 8 was meant to do.



To Be Continued in the next Newsletter

.2017 SAN FELIPE RALLY ON THE BEACH WRAPUP !

The 2017 Rally began with a 3 day pre-rally at the Yuma County Fairgrounds in Yuma, AZ. 59 Rigs and 108 people attended the rally including 2 young children. At the pre-rally, we covered the basics of safe RV travel in Mexico, reviewed the route to San Felipe, and enjoyed a good meal at Pueblo Viejo Restaurant in Los Algodones, MX after getting our FMMs. On 2/ 9, we traveled to Pete's Camp just outside San Felipe in Baja California, Mx and spent 11 days dry camping on the beach by the Sea of Cortez. 54 rigs were parked on the beach and 4 needing electric were parked on privately owned lots in El Dorado Ranch. One participant parked at his home in San Felipe. El Dorado Ranch provided each attendee with a VIP pass so we could all use the pool, tennis courts and other amenities of the El Dorado facilities.

After everyone was parked, we enjoyed a meal of comfort food--spaghetti and meat sauce at the Pete's Camp Restaurant. Other meals included a special Valentines dinner at La Vaquita Restaurant and a Fish Fry on the beach provided by the wonderful staff at Pete's Camp.

The Charity Committee was immediately busy sorting in-kind donations and visiting local organizations to find out the most important needs of the San Felipe community. The Charity Auction was held under tents on the beach despite high winds and we ended with nearly \$10,000 to help those in need in San Felipe plus \$1000 to Escapees CARE. Members participated in the San Felipe annual cancer walk and the Fiesta on the Malecón that followed.



Members of the El Dorado Ranch Scorpions Club organized off-road trips through the desert and mountains around San Felipe. Others visited the Valle de los Gigantes (Valley of the Giants) to see the cardón cacti, the world's largest cactus and the Puertocitos hot springs on the coast south of San Felipe on day trips. The group enjoyed the local El Dorado Ranch Flea Market both Saturday mornings we were in town buying local produce and crafts.

Local vendors sold us fresh clams for a small fee which many of us enjoyed on two different occasions. Pete's Camp owner Norma Navarro and her staff held 3 terrific cooking classes for Empanadas, Tamales, and Flan, complete with printed recipes! We even got ultralight rides!

The annual meeting of Escapees Mexican Connection Chapter 8 was held on the beach 2/17 to approve the Charity Committee's recommendations, and to elect the Chapter 8 Executive Board, including President Cynthia Ponder, Secretary Barb Ely, Treasurer Steve Bufty, Newsletter Editor Lin Hines, Membership Chair Maryke Hines, Webmaster Kevin Ridley, and 2018 Wagonmasters Cassandra and Ed Dennis. Charlie & Gloria Goss and Sarah & George Baker were appointed Row Reps for the Escapade in Tucson in March 2017.

We had a few days of rain mostly at night and some wind so we were glad we had provided hooded windbreakers as the Rally gift this year. They were well utilized and we were able to provide the staff at Pete's Camp with a few left at the end of the Rally as a big Thank You for all the work they did putting tents up and down, keeping the showers and restrooms clean, mix drinks, fix breakfasts, and generally provide such a wonderful welcome to us all

More San Felipe Rally---

When the Rally ended, a group headed south to Guerrero Negro and Laguna Ojo de Liebre (also known as Scammon's Lagoon), to see and pet Gray Whales which come every year to give birth to their young. A group headed back to the U.S., and some stayed right in Pete's Camp to enjoy the quiet for a few more days.

We want to thank all of the marvelous volunteers from Group Leaders, Tailgunners, Parking crew & chief Randy Dolan, Charity Committee & Paul Williams and Jane Ferri, and those who just stepped in from the very first day of registration to help make this Rally a fun place to be. We know that it was your hard work and dedication that made it a great Rally for all of us! I especially want to thank Orene and Larry Brown, Steve and Donna Bufty, Ed and Jan Biller, Lin and Maryke Hines for having our back throughout the year of planning, as well as Ron and Janet Sortor even though they did not get to come on the trip.

Jim and I left with Ed and Kassandra for a quick tour of the Pacific coast of the Baja in search of good campgrounds, good food, fun things to do and ULSD for next year's rally. We had a wonderful time together and I know the 2018 rally is going to be AWESOME! I will let them share the details with you, but plan on joining us! Looking forward to seeing many of you next year. Safe travels!

Cynthia and Jim Ponder, 2017 Wagonmasters



Great sunset in desert near Pete's Camp photo by Lin Hines

EVERYBODY NEEDS A GOOD TACO!!

A Big Thank You to long time Chapter 8 member Joy Melton!

For a number of years, Joy Melton has allowed Chapter 8 to store our PA system, bulk membership flyers and decals, our Chapter banners and Fiesta plates, bowls etc. for Escapade and more at her home in Yuma, AZ. We want to thank Joy for her service to the Chapter, her many years coming to Rallies in Mexico with Chapter 8.



The 2017 San Felipe Rally began in Yuma!

Photographs and captions by Lin Hines unless otherwise credited



Lots of meetings! Photo by Beal Trahan



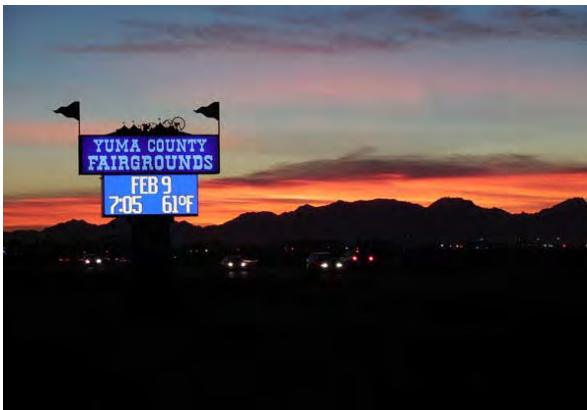
Yuma Marine F-18 fighters thundered over!



Wow—Yuma has the reddest sunsets ever!



Algodones, Mexico—getting FMMs & Dinner!



Our Parkers left the Fairground real early!



Group 2 lined up—Photo by Laurie Humphries



Crossing into Mexico at the Mexicali border



Turning into Pete's Camp, San Felipe!

Rally Activities at Pete's Camp

Photos
by Lin
Hines



Chapter 8 rigs lined up on beach-Pete's Camp



Shorebirds at low tide



Meetings on the nice warm beach!



Meeting under the tent on the beach!



View of Chapter 8 encampment from the water



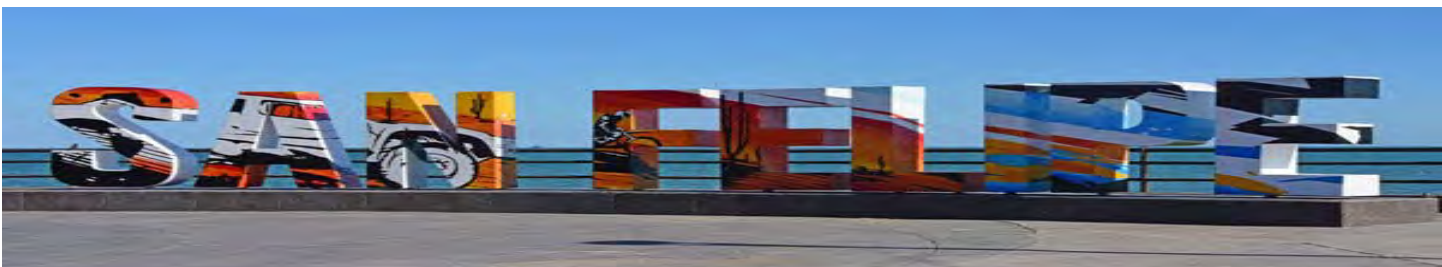
Baja Taxi at Pete's Camp



This pickup is drowned & will never move again!



Ice Cream, indeed!



Busy Churro stand on malecón—yum!

Photos
by
Lin Hines



Street band by malecón restaurants



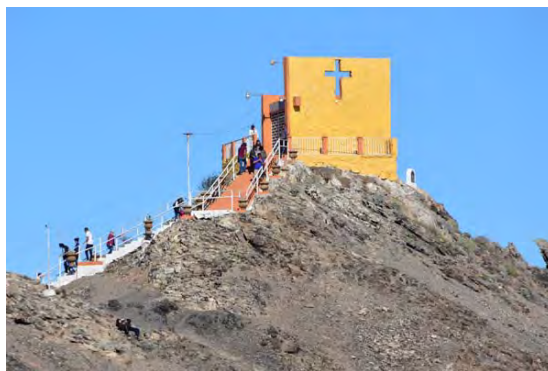
Unloading fish at San Felipe port docks



Landmark Rockodile bar sign



Playing on the beach by malecón



Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Street Vendor-mobiles



←Tattoos Jerry



Excellent fish dinner

More fun on the beach! General Meeting, Charity Auctions, Fish and Shrimp Fry



Chapter 8 General Meeting crowd

*Photos
By
Lin
Hines*



Holding down the tent—windstorm Gen. meeting



Ponder This! Carved bear—2017 Wagonmaster gift



Silent auction gift baskets and bottles-classy!



Dora frying shrimp at the Beach Fish/Shrimp Fry



Ed Biller's winning bid for Orene's Jockey shorts



Our lovely Auction "Vannas" demonstrating RV sewer fittings, Bill Dominek auctioneer, gift baskets and margarita glasses!



More
Fun
In
San
Felipe

Valentine's Dinner at La Vaquita Norte
Photo by Beal Trahan



San Felipe Humor—Do Not Pile Snow in this Yard!
Photo by Mark Ewell



Shrimp Cocktail by Ellie Dotson



Pemex prices 2/2017



Auction cashiers by Orene Brown

Members of the newly formed BOF (ATV UTV) were able to tour San Felipe with the local riding club the Scorpions. We rode into the Baja Desert as well as on the beach on the Sea of Cortez. We were able to ride the same trails used by the San Felipe 250 and the Baja 1000 with tight technical trails through the mountains and cactus and even the wide open spaces out on the dry lake beds. Out on a dry lake bed area is a lonely shack where a 97 year old Mexican gentleman sells ice cold beer!! Thank you to the Scorpions for the great rides. As you can see fun was had by all who attended.!

Text and photographs by Ron Johnson SKP # 119976



Miembros del Capítulo

News From Membership Chair Maryke Hines:

Chapter 8 has now 204 current members! During the Escapade in Tucson Charlie and Gloria Goss did a terrific job at The Row getting people interested in the Mexican Connection. We signed up 34 new members at the Escapade! All new members since Sept. 2016 are listed below. The Chapter 8 Seminar by Cynthia and the Social (Fiesta) where Ed and Cassandra talked about the Rally plans for 2018 really helped membership. Since the Escapade we have received several more Chapter 8 memberships. The form on the website is working very well, and our new Webmaster will leave the same form up once the new and improved site is on line, so that should help. During the summer I will contact all the members whose membership expired in April of this year, and hopefully many will renew. Any Membership questions, email me: <chap8membership@gmail.com> *Maryke Hines*

New members since Fall 2016 Issue —some are renewals

Don and Julie Klein	Jack and Karen Cotton	Travis and Laurie Humphries
Roger and Mary Lou Slape	Bob and Cindy Pettit	Nick and Teri Alvanos
Brett & Cheri Miller	Dan and Beverly Armstrong	Joyce Long
Mark Hauser & Judith Sniderman	Judy and Luke Rinehimer	Mike and Diana Todd
Donna and Darwin Betteridge	Alfred and Sharon Leimbach	Paul and Charlotte Barber
Marti Verkuilen and Charlie Tiebout	Robert and Kay Finch	Brice and Sherri Mitchell
Noel Lyons and Jacala Kinney	Bob and Judy Kominski	Dan and Laura Pike
Michael and Molly Patronick	Donna Swanson	Boyd and Kenna Walton
Earle and Tammy Yost	Leslie Manion & David Lopushiky	Dave Heck
Garry and Karen Gregorius	George & Stephanie Denninhoff	Comer and Cookie Hudgins
Jim McEver and Connie Farley	Lowell Thill	John and Pam Lindstrom
Pamela and Bruce McKay	Dori and Bill Johnson	David and Linda Mirenich
Edward Armstrong	Martha Montgomery	Dell Ellis
Larry Hemeon and Terrie Gilstrap	Sandra and Randall Wetzel	John Funke & Maryanna Smellow
Jack and Pat Mulhall	Ken and Amakelech Secord	Rick and Janet Pilger
Barbara and Joseph Baranek	Dick and Jackie Driver	Kevin and Emma Ridley
Mike and Teri Burger	Michael and Rosanne Robins	Ralph and Lorraine Sawyer
Nancy and Garth Johnson	Bill and Kathy Cooper	Tom and Mary Daugherty
Gerry and Linda Belcher	Ken and Shirley Smedley	Susan King
Maija and Pat Spink	Bill and Katy Cooper	Susan Parsons
Jim and Linda Work	Randy and Sherry Pavlich	John Freitag and Kathy Emmons
Don Stier	Herlinda Lopez	Gail Kapusnick
Cindi and Roger Olson	Chuck and Jan Moore	David and Shelda Dola
Steve and Fran Rosenlund	Bob and Cindy Pettit	Kit and Candace Kramer
Mike and Barb Pickering	Sandra Gamache	Lou and Betty Sepulveda
Richard Ashburn	Janice Westfall	Ed and Nancy Bump
Richard and Becky March	Jodi Ochs	Bob and Susan Vandenheuvel
Carl Cranfill	Tom Deakins	Ken and Bea Marler
Sally and Lou Anderson	Evelyn Wood	



*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!

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>

Mail from our new Webmaster, Kevin Ridley

Hello fellow Chapter 8 members! I have been "volunteered" as your new Webmaster by our current Presidents Jim & Cynthia Ponder. My wife Emma and our two daughters, Eloise and Eliza, are a bit of an outlier in the Escapees crowd; we genuinely enjoyed how welcoming the Chapter 8 Rally group was and look forward to the opportunity to give back via the website. Work is well underway on the first phase of the site, which involves migrating the hosting provider, and retooling the site to use WordPress. Moving the site over to WordPress will set the path for future improvements/features such as a "Blog" section and mobile friendly capabilities. The Blog will allow authors to upload their own content that I think will be very useful for enabling the current Wagonmaster to provide updates as things develop throughout the year. By the time you are reading this, Phase 1 should be complete! Take a look and tell me what you think: <http://www.mexicanconnection08.com/>

Mensaje del Tesorero

The Treasurer Speaks!

FINAL TREASURER'S REPORT (4-30-2017)

TREASURY BALANCE AS OF MAY 1, 2016		20,522.13
INCOME		
Membership (Dues & Decal sales)	1,152.00	
Rally Registrations (less refunds)	24,470.00	
Rally Cancellation Fees	320.00	
Year Long Charity Donations	3,740.00	
Miscellaneous Donations (Chili sales, beverage sales, 50/50, Etc.)	729.50	
Live Auction Donations	3,927.00	
Silent Auction Donations	810.00	
TOTAL INCOME		35,148.50
EXPENSES		
Costs to represent Chapter 8 at Escapade	405.78	
Yuma Pre-Pre-Rally Expenses	1,188.00	
Yuma Pre-Rally Expenses	3,930.00	
Stop-over Pre-Rally Expenses	0.00	
San Felipe Rally Expenses (Camping, meals, jackets, supplies)	18,098.16	
CHARITABLE DONATIONS		
"Seed Money" for Charity from Prior Year	1,483.55	
Total Charity Funds for Distribution and Future "Seeding"	10,690.05	
1. Nehemiah Fund	1,360.00	
2. Santa Maria de Guadalupe Catholic Church	1,440.00	
3. San Felipe People	1,200.00	
4. Centro de Atencion Multiple (CAM)	1,200.00	
5. Escuela Josefa Ortiz Dominguez	1,200.00	
6. Red Cross (Cruz Rojo)	800.00	
7. Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF)	800.00	
8. Escapees CARE, Inc.	1,000.00	
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES		
PayPal Fees	858.13	
Miscellaneous expenses (shipping, wagonmaster gift)	136.17	
Miscellaneous expenses (Website maintenance, Bank fees)	143.58	
Miscellaneous expenses (Supplies, Caravan decals)	1,005.90	
TOTAL SPENDING		34,765.72
RALLY PROFIT/LOSS (Journaled to General Fund)		1,253.84
CHARITY PROFIT/LOSS (Journaled to Future Charity "Seeding")		1,690.05
NET FISCAL YEAR INCREASE/DECREASE		382.78
TREASURY BALANCE (as of APRIL 30, 2017)		20,904.91

Steve Bufty, Treasurer

Secretary's Minute

Bylaws Paragraph 2.2 — A minor change to Chapter 8's Bylaws was approved at the 2017 Rally General Meeting clarifying that voting members of the Executive Board consist of not only the President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, 3rd VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President (1 yr) but also Board-appointed officers: Newsletter Editor, Membership Chair, Historian & Webmaster. Also changed—**Bylaws Paragraph 2.3** to: "No more than two offices may be held by the same person." Both changes were approved by both the Board and the Membership present at the General Meeting February 17, 2017 in San Felipe, Baja California.

Barb Ely, Secretary



El Dorado Ranch flea market highlight! These little girls strolled the market soliciting funds for their school & Hannah for Kindergarten Queen!

←L Photo-Lin Hines
R Photo Jan Biller →



Algunas Palabras en Español
LET'S LEARN SPANISH!



English:

Campground
Motorhome
Trailer (5th wheel)
Wine
Birds
Grey Whale
Trash, Garbage
Showers

Español:

Campamento
Casa rodante
Trailer or Remolque
Vino
Aves or Pajaros
Ballena Gris
Basura
Duchas or Regadores

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

Hola, Mexican Connection! Let me start by saying that I met so many members of Chapter 8 at Escapade, and what a great bunch of folks! I knew that your Chapter was a warm bunch of people, but meeting you in person was a wonderful experience.

The 57th Escapade has come and gone, but I'm still hearing from many how much fun they had. I was impressed with the work that all the volunteers did, including the ROW representatives that were faithfully there each day to showcase the best of their groups.

In case you were curious about the stats for Escapade, here are the figures as close as I can obtain: we had 917 registered rigs. There were 99 registered weekly walk-ins, and an additional -720- daily walk-ins with 500 of those attending on Community Day. This adds up to a total of - 2652 - attendees at Escapade.

There was also a fabulous outpouring of support for CARE. The "Donuts for CARE" reported sales of \$4510. Alliant Credit Union purchased a \$900 and a \$1400 donut! That must have been some kind of donut! Ha! The total of all donations to CARE during Escapade was \$7991. Thank you to all that gave!

Escapade 2018 is already in the works and I do hope to see Chapter 8 at Sedalia, MO, for the 58th gathering. It's going to be a great time and I look forward to meeting even more of you! I hope each of you take time to look over the events calendar either in the magazine or online at <https://escapees.com/fun/events-2>.

Keep up the great things that you're doing as part of the Mexican Connection and Escapees! Safe travels and happy trails! www.escapees.com/fun/chapters

Lockie Sailer Chapter/BOF Director Escapees *RV Club*

-----GOOD TIMES AT ESCAPADE 2017—TUCSON-----



<—Charlie & Gloria Goss

Chapter 8 —>
"Row" booth at
2017 Tucson
Escapade



We had a great booth on the Row at Escapade this year & lots of new members signed up by cheerleaders Charlie & Gloria Goss + a good Seminar and big Fiesta turnout!



911 now works in Baja California NORTE as an Emergency Number. Baja Sur will activate 911 between January and June 2017. Mexico's 066 emergency number still works.

A brand new 10th edition of the Moon Baja Handbook has just been published. The author of this authoritative guide is Jennifer Kramer, prolific writer for the Discover Baja Travel Club newsletter.

NEW CHAPTER 8 HONORARY MEMBERS—RAFAEL AND NORMA NAVARRO!



Rafael and Norma Navarro, owners of Pete's Camp in San Felipe, Baja California, were named "Honorary Members" of Escapees Chapter 8, The Mexican Connection, by incoming President Cynthia Ponder at the Chapter's General Meeting on February 17, 2017. They were presented with the 2017 San Felipe Rally jackets. Rafael and Norma were extremely helpful to the Wagonmasters and gave us all a great experience in San Felipe! I won't be surprised if we return to Pete's Camp again in the near future!

Photograph by Lin Hines

Dias Feriados / Mexican National Holidays/Observances—Spring

May 1—Dia de Trabajo—Labor Day--National Holiday

May 5—Batalla de Puebla—Cinco de Mayo-only observed in state of Puebla & U.S.!

May 8—Compleaños de Miguel Hidalgo—Observance—Father of Mexican Independence

June 1—Dia de la Marina—observance—Mexico's Navy Day

Newsletter Story Submissions Invited! We're looking for stories for future issues! Stories or anecdotes related to a Chapter 8 Rally, activities, stores, restaurants you discovered in the host Mexican town, maybe a museum, getting your RV repaired or painted, renting a 4x4 or the great chicken barbeque place! A humorous story would be great and a couple photographs to enliven your story encouraged! Please email <Chap8newsletter@gmail.com>

2017 CHAPTER 8 CHARITY IN SAN FELIPE!

Text and Photographs by Lin Hines

2017 will go down in the Chapter 8 record books for the greatest amount of dollars raised for Charity through Rally participant's cash donations before and during the Rally (\$3740), Chili and drink sales, both silent and live Charity Auctions, the 50/50 raffle organized by Bill Dominek (\$459) and charity carryover "seed" money from 2016. Our Charity auctions alone brought in a record total of \$ 4737! What amazing generosity from our members!

The economy of San Felipe has been in bad shape since 2014 when very restrictive southern Sea of Cortez fishing regulations devastated this main industry and many people in the area are struggling, with many children not getting one or more meals a day.

The 2017 Charity Committee voting members consisted of Larry Brown (President's representative), Donna Patton (Treasurer's representative), Gloria Goss, Bill Dominek and Chair, Paul Williams. The Charity Committee was fortunate to have Sr. Rafael Navarro, owner of Pete's Camp, our Rally's venue in San Felipe, who for many years has helped the San Felipe community with his own charity program, set up a meeting at the Pete's Camp Restaurant of representatives of 9 local charities on February 11, 2017. Each organization presented its program and its needs to members of the Charity Committee and interested Rally participants present. Rafael acted as emcee and translator when necessary. Committee members were able to gain valuable knowledge of these groups that helped when they made actual physical visits to the charity group's premises to further learn if they were a worthy recipient of our Charity monies as well as receiving in-kind materials such as clothes, etc..



Charity Committee with Rafael Navarro (in vest)



Rafael on left with Charity Group representatives

The Charity Report did not give details of each group, its purposes and the specific reason for recommending Charity dollars for that organization. I'll give you those reasons since I have been on the Charity Committee many times in past years & went with the Committee on all of their visits this year and photographed each organization, except for the Nehemiah Fund, where the Committee split up and I went with the members that visited DIF. Actual U.S. \$ amounts approved by Board and Membership in Treasurer's Report page 17.

Nehemiah Fund—this new organization started by Jeremy Pickens feeds 150 school kids a day at 3 schools, with the requirement that the kids attend school regularly. They would like to expand their program to more schools. The Committee was impressed seeing their work first hand and would like this program to expand.



Above-children in Nehemiah feeding program
Nehemiah photos (4) courtesy Nehemiah Fund

Right—Treasurer Steve , Maryke Hines, Committee members Donna Patton, and in green shirt, Jeremy Pickens of Nehemiah receiving check from Chapter 8 and Committee member Gloria Goss.



Parroquia Santa Maria de Guadalupe Catholic Church—**Caritas** is an international charity

organization and the San Felipe group operates from this church with 10 different charity efforts. Each Sunday they feed 50 people, they make food baskets and take out to rural areas to 250 people, they supply medicines, clothes and more. Mexico is primarily a Catholic country and church groups like this help many people in Mexico in many ways. Caritas here wants to feed and help more people and needs more resources to buy food and other goods to distribute in the San Felipe area.



Gloria talking to Padre Oscar and the Caritas charity people in green aprons

Gente San Felipe—San Felipe’s People—this organization headed by Silvia Colin, who herself is handicapped, helps the handicapped and single mothers make and sell unique arts and crafts and eventually become self-supporting. She has 2 deaf mute girls including her daughter, a young man paralyzed on one side, a single mother and several others currently making art projects. She displays their art at the Saturday El Dorado Ranch flea market and splits the proceeds with the artists. Silvia speaks fluent English. She wants to recruit more handicapped people, get the girls hearing aids and always needs funds to buy more art materials. Handicapped people in Mexico are stigmatized & marginalized. This program helps them!



Window Sign-Free Lessons for Handicapped Silvia and daughter Macro Quality artwork produced in the studio & for sale

Centro de Atencion Multiple (CAM)—Handicapped School—Claudia, the principal gave us an impressive tour of classrooms, the carpenter training program, the culinary classroom & kitchen. This is a government school but as usual, teachers, utilities, and some equipment is furnished but the school fundraises to fill its needs—the carpenter class makes doghouses to sell and the cooks sell baked goods at festivals. Their bus has been inoperable for more than a year—engine trouble, wheelchair lift broken, seats broken, bad tires. 50+ disabled kids here from 2 years to 45. There are many other disabled, but without the bus, they can’t get to the school. Propose helping with bus with Rafael supervising progress!



Committee in classroom 2/14 Cooking Class made cupcakes for us! Kids in academic class

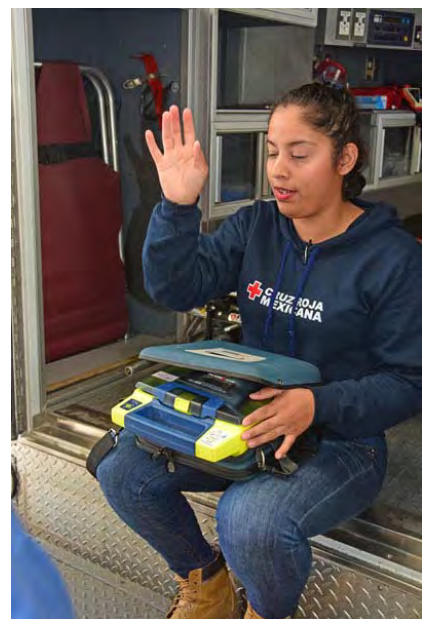
Josefa Ortiz Dominguez—Las Minitas School—this school is 4 miles south of San Felipe in a rural, very poor area. In addition to 37 area children, they now have 15 children from an orphanage. The school building has 2 rooms with grades 1,2,3 in one & 4,5,6 in the other. This school is short on everything, failing air conditioners, need for more space, and especially since it's in the 90s in spring and summer, they need a roof over the concrete play area for shade. The school PTA is fundraising and if funded, Rafael will supervise here too and get at least one half of the roof built this year and Rafael's charity poker run will add more money!



Students, Teachers & Committee Kids at lunch in cheerful lunchroom Gloria, teacher Juanita & principal Cruz Roja San Felipe—Mexican Red Cross—Cruz Roja all over Mexico are the First Responders—emergency ambulance/ paramedics. They are chronically underfunded and the state headquarters in Mexicali, the capital, uses up most funds & little trickles down to San Felipe. Their needs are fixing one dead ambulance, very low on all first aid and medical supplies & no money for fuel or mechanic. Need half Queen bed sheets for gurneys. Can only fundraise 1 day a year on Cruz Roja Day in fall. Geena speaks English well & is dedicated!



CRUZ
ROJA
SAN
FELIPE



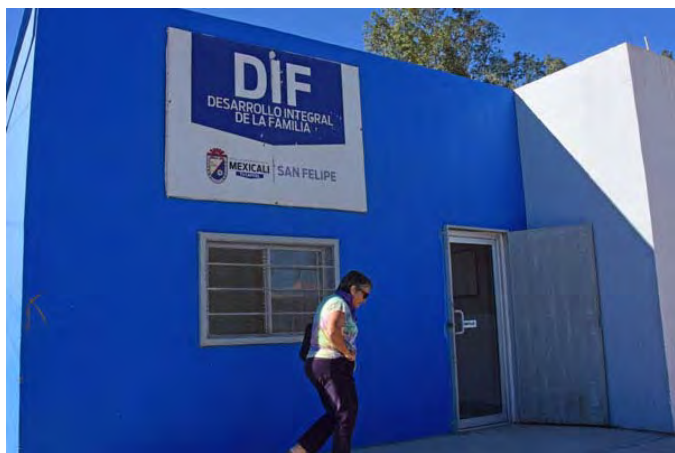
Top L— 3 Cruz Roja Ambulances

L bottom-Randy Dolan, Geena and Gloria Goss

Right—Geena demonstrating defibrillator—only one. 2nd one needs repair.

Rafael, a former Cruz Roja board member, will monitor.

Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF) —DIF, pronounced “Deef” is found in every Mexican town of any size and is usually ceremonially headed by the Mayor’s wife, but not in San Felipe because the town is part of the Municipality of Mexicali so Cinthia is the Directora here. DIF is the local social services agency supplying food boxes, clothing and classes to help poor become self-supporting. Unfortunately, like Cruz Roja, Mexicali gets most of the resources and little comes here limiting their outreach. They badly need cooking oil, rice, beans, flour, maseca, pasta, tomato paste to help their clients. Now No money—No classes!



DIF’s distinctive blue building in poor neighborhood Charity people & DIF Directora Cinthia in middle Tourism keeps part of San Felipe going but there are many people out of work and just barely hanging on. There is a great need here and Chapter 8 members can be proud of our efforts to help the friendly people of San Felipe that made our stay here so memorable!

After all the visits to the charity organizations, the Committee met to make some decisions. Treasurer Steve Bufty, the Chapter Treasurer, told the Committee that \$9000 total was available for Charity with the Committee agreeing that \$1000 would go to Escapees CARE as we had done for many years, leaving \$8000 to distribute in San Felipe. Voting Committee members assigned percentages to each organization and that determined their U.S.\$ grant

recommendations first to the Chapter 8 Board and then to the Membership at the General Meeting on February 17, 2017. The amounts are shown on the Treasurer’s Report on page 16 of this newsletter.



Left—Bill Dominek in his 50/50 Raffle persona—I don’t think he missed extracting \$5-10 or more from everyone! Right—Randy Dolan brought a bunch of soccer balls to Las Minitas School and the kids loved it! This girl was outside kicking the ball soon after the picture !



THANK YOU FROM THE NEHEMIAH FUND IN SAN FELIPE!

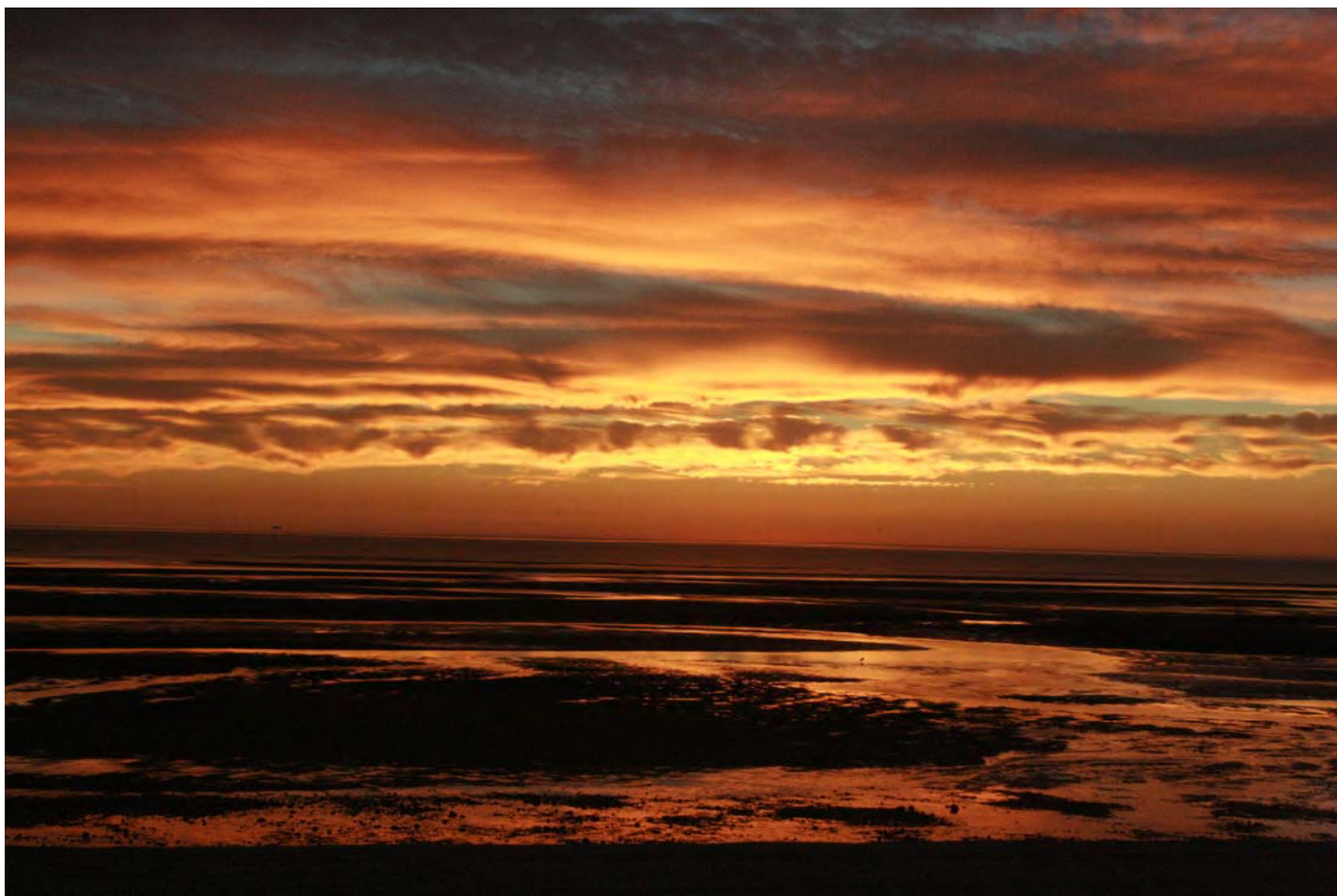
We would like to thank you for your financial support to the Hoy Si Comi (I Ate Today) Feeding Program in San Felipe, Mexico. With your help we are able to feed 150 meals to at-risk children living in poverty. Thank you again for your support and partnership!

Jeremy Pickens | Chief Financial Officer | Nehemiah Fund, Inc

www.thenehemiahfund.org



Chapter 8's 2018 Wagonmasters Ed and Cassandra Dennis on right with Tony and DeeDee Sparks have completed a 2nd scouting trip all the way down to Guerrero Negro in Baja Sur! This photo submitted by Tony showing the pleasures of scouting in Baja's Guadalupe Valley wine region. Tough job!



San Felipe Sunrise — *photo by John Ely*