

La Conexión

Mexicana

Escapes RV Club Chapter 8

Summer 2018

2019 Rolling Rally Bulletin 2

Traveling with Pets in Baja California

CBing Through Baja California

Arte por todos lados (Art Everywhere)



La Conexión Mexicana

Escapees RV Club Chapter 8

Member of Escapees Social Network, Inc.

© 2018 Escapees RV Club Chapter 8

Summer 2018 - Volume 39, No. 2

Website: www.mexicanconnection08.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/EscapeesMexicanConnection

On the cover:

Wine to Whales caravan goers were treated to several murals on apartment buildings during day 1 of the city tour of Ensenada. Photo by Bob Pettit.

Reports and Information

Mission statement, Chapter 8 Officers	3
News Briefs	4
Editor's Notebook	5
President's Message	6
The 2018 Wine to Whales Baja Caravan Survey Results	8
Next Issue & Submitting Content	38

Features

2019 Rolling Rally Bulletin 2	14
Bringing a Pet to Baja California	24
Requirements for Crossing the Border with Pets	28
CBing Through Baja California	30
RV Vagabond Jerry's Videos of Baja California	32
Arte por todos lados (Art Everywhere)	33

The Mission of Chapter 8, which was organized in 1985, is 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.



Website: www.mexicanconnection08.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/EscapesMexicanConnection

Membership Reminder: Chapter 8 membership is due in April of each year. If you haven't already, please renew on the Chapter 8 website's [Membership Renewal page](#).

Escapees Chapter 8 Officers

President — Ed Dennis, ed@ekdennis.com

Immediate Past President — Cynthia Ponder, cynacat@gmail.com

1st VP & 2019 Wagonmaster — Kassandra Dennis, kassandra@ekdennis.com

2nd VP & 2020 Wagonmaster — Bob Payne, bobsapayne@aol.com

3rd VP & 2021 Wagonmaster — **Vacant, please volunteer**

Treasurer — Steve Bufty, stevebufty@yahoo.com

Secretary — Jean Pedersen, jeancarolp@yahoo.com

Membership — Jay Hault, hault2@yahoo.com

Webmaster — **Vacant, please volunteer**

Newsletter Editor — Joseph M. de Leon, chap8newsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter Layout/Graphics — Joseph M. de Leon, chap8newsletter@gmail.com

Historian — Debby Clark, debrv@me.com

News Briefs

various sources

Recap of the Row at Escapade58

Connie Farley and Jim McEver wrote up a good review of their experience as Chapter 8 Row representatives at the annual Escapees national rally. There was a wonderful turnout and lots of interest in the upcoming 2019 Rolling Rally.

[Read the full blog post on the Chapter 8 website](#)

Volunteer for a Wagonmaster position

The position of Third Vice President, who will become the Wagonmaster in 2021, is currently open. If you're interested in volunteering or would like to know what's involved, please message Chapter 8 President Ed Dennis at ed@ekdennis.com.



SKPs Ahoy!

September 1, 2018, at 12 Noon CDT Registration Begins for Chapter 8's 18-day, Baja California, Rolling Rally Adventure
Catch the latest details at www.MexicanConnection08.com

Discover Potrero Park's California retreat...
Explore the vinyards and zoologico exotics of Guadalupe Valley...
Enjoy Ensenada, fine Fiestas, random Charity and beautiful Beach Time!

Editor's Notebook

Joseph M. de Leon

Putting together this newsletter is an amazing way to relive my first caravan to Baja California. Editing articles, choosing photos, and curating content for you reminds me of how grateful I am to have the privilege to travel in an RV.



In the weeks leading up to the caravan in Feb. 2018, I was so nervous. I worried our rig would break down. Mexico could be dangerous. I hope I don't get sick. What if something unexpected happens?

One of the most memorable places we visited after the Wine to Whales caravan was Daggat's Camp in Bahia de Los Angeles on the Sea of Cortez. It's hard to beat the sense of peaceful isolation. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Something unexpected did happen. Within about a mile of crossing the border in our group, I realized all at once there was nothing to fear. I felt an odd mix of relief and silliness for having stressed so much about what could go wrong. Very quickly, I began to take note of everything that went right. Meeting new friends. Seeing beautifully rugged landscapes. Enjoying everything Baja California has to offer.

Seize every opportunity that comes your way. Photograph hidden gems. Eat new foods. Talk to strangers. Most of all, let go of fear.

Joseph is a former graphics and web producer and newspaper reporter currently working for the U.S. Forest Service. He travels in a Class C motorhome with his wife Denise and their dog Kimbo.

President's Message

Ed Dennis

iHola amigos de la Conexión Mexicana!

Some years ago, Chapter 8 was the largest Escapee chapter with over 600 members... and slowly dwindled down to less than a quarter of its previous size. Fortunately, the combination of a spirited 23-day Caravan, our successful Escapade team on The ROW and at the Taco-fest Afternoon Social... Chapter 8 is on the grow again!



Ed Dennis, Chapter 8 Mexican Connection President and 2018 Wine to Whales Wagonmaster. Chapter 8 archival photo

A color copy of our last newsletter was laminated and available to read on The Row, which helped us collect more emails from interested SKPs than had ever been collected by Chapter 8. At the rate we are adding new members we will soon pass the 200-member mark... and that gives us a better opportunity to have more activities than our once a year rally.

The [2018 Wine to Whales Caravan](#) was a long 7-venue, 23-day trip, now followed by a shorter 3-venue, 18-day [2019 Rolling Rally](#). I have been asked if it would be possible to have two rallies a year, one long and one short. That would probably require two wagonmasters and a lot more teamwork... and that might make an interesting survey question to see if we could create one longer caravan and one shorter rally each year. The camaraderie that begins with the teamwork required to keep Chapter 8 events economically feasible for most folks... ends with creating friendships that stand the test of time.

Your [Chapter 8 Executive Board](#) has been busy tidying up the confusion that has reigned about the rules and regulations that were duly past as [Bylaws](#) and [Standing Rules](#) designed to keep the chapter on track. The surveys ([page 8](#)) taken have shown that members who voted in the last general meeting thought they were not properly prepared for the decisions they were being asked to make with their vote. A great deal of criticism was directed toward the methods used

to meet the charity goals of the chapter. Consequently, a renewed effort will be made to bring the will of those who make the annual journey in better harmony with the mission statement of Chapter 8.

The advanced planning of the 2019 Rolling Rally has been directed toward taking the hidden agenda "petty politics" of yesteryear out of the good natured, fun loving, team camaraderie of future years. We are a non-profit organization of volunteers working together to safely enjoy Mexican adventures, develop our RV travel skills and enrich our hearts with the joy of helping our neighbors south of the border.

Happily... there was one Group Leader on the Wine to Whales Baja Caravan that received high marks in our Caravanner Survey for the democratic way the leader allowed the group to participate in decisions to be made... and the happy results it created for all concerned that extended far beyond the Caravan's end.

Sadly... there was another group in which the Group Leader (as a couple) enforced their will arbitrarily as to when fuel stops or potty breaks would occur despite the real needs of individuals within the group. Impromptu "Now hear this!" dictatorial pronouncements replaced the spirit of camaraderie that should have been. We cannot afford leadership that trips over its own ego in a self-righteous short sightedness.

With diligence, insight and consideration... the many who actually contribute should rightfully impact the direction of our chapter. And those who would rule by dictate should find another chapter.. for this one is about mutual concern and cooperation on the road of happy adventures South of the Border Down Mexico Way.

Ed

Ed Dennis, President
Escapees RV Club, Chapter 8

The 2018 Wine to Whales Baja Caravan Survey Results

By Wagonmasters Ed & Kassandra Dennis

Thanks to all the caravanners who took the time to fill out the survey and provide such astute and constructive feedback. Your “after-the-fact” conscientious comments provided a clearer understanding of the positive and negative issues thereby providing “grass roots” guidelines to building better rallies. For example, this year the Wagonmaster has formed a Rally Advisory Group of independent thinking Chapter 8 rally participants to shape the next rally in ways that bring more satisfaction to those who participate in the rally and cast their vote for the way our chapter is run... and who their vote makes responsible to organize the next rally and subsequently lead our chapter in the right direction.



Wine to Whales rally participants meet to discuss the day's plans. Photo by Bob Pettit

The Survey Says:

- 1. Better Separation of Solar Power and Generator Sections:**
Full hookup sites are increasingly hard to find and dry camping in Mexico tends to be part of the adventure. For example, the RV resort with full hookups on the estuary in *Ensenada* was razed in February to become high priced residences. It shall be the duty of the Parking Chairperson & Crew to reward those who use generators for less than 30 minutes a day by parking them together and parking those who use a generator for up to 4 hours a day in a separate area.
- 2. The Selection of Campgrounds received high accolades:**
Just about every respondent raved about (a) the natural setting and tasty water of Potrero County Park just across the border from *Tecate*; (b) the unique atmosphere of the *Zoológico Parque del Niño Jersey* in the middle of the Mexican wine making valley;

(c) La Jolla Beach Camp with its clean ocean beach, Pabloff Family hospitality, and relaxed pace so near the hustle and bustle of *Ensenada*. These survey comments and the destination announced by the successful candidate for Wagonmaster resulted in the same three sites being selected for the 2019 Rolling Rally.

3. **Being so close to Whales was GOOD but narrow potholed Hwy 1 beyond Ensenada was BAD:** Consequently, 2019 will stick to the good roads and new adventures closely associated with them. For the more adventurous, information about exploring *Ojos Negros, San Felipe, Cataviña, Bahia de Los Angeles* and *Guerrero Negro*... as well as the "good roads" return via the beautiful Pacific Ocean Highway toward *Tijuana* with a cutoff to *Tecate*. High marks were also given *El Pabellon's* Pacific Ocean beach campground and the scenic beauty of the giant boulders and other worldly boojum trees of the National Preserve in *Cataviña*.

4. **Group Leader Challenges:** Commercial caravans usually limit the number of rigs to between 12 to 24. For three decades, Chapter 8 Rallies have often had 40-60 rigs or more. To minimize traffic congestion and provide a beneficial smaller group experience, Chapter 8 selects a Group Leader and Tail-gunner to form a traveling group of 5-7 rigs. The survey indicated that all but one group was either happy or very happy with their Group Leader... and only one Group Leader failed according by those in and out of his group! For everyone's benefit, the earlier people to speak of their frustrations to the Wagonmaster the



Group Leader and Membership lead Jay Hoult discusses an upcoming route with Group 6 participants. Photo by Jean Pedersen

more likely frustration can become part of the solution instead of a continuing problem. A good Group Leader will have clear communication skills, patient sharing of information and be open to input from everyone in the group. Good Group Leaders tend to become good Wagonmasters. Chapter 8 is a volunteer organization... and good volunteers are the first step to having good Group Leaders who gain experience needed to be a good Wagonmaster.

5. **Most reviewers loved the City Tours... but some thought two days were too long:** To our great surprise, nearly everyone on the Wine to Whales Baja Caravan opted for the extra price city tour option. So, for 2019, there will be a one-day guided tour narrowed down to the most highly rated destinations and the tour will be included in the price of the Rally.



Day 2 of the City Tour in 2018 included a farm visit and cheese tasting at La Cava de Marcelo, where traditional cheeses are aged in a cave. Photo by Bob Pettit

6. **Pets are a great comfort and concern while sightseeing:**
In the past, pet owners have gotten together and taken turns at "pet sitting." Early on there will be an opportunity for pet owners to get together and think about ways they can help one another and keep their pets happy. ([see pets on page 24](#))
7. **Confusion in voting at the General Meeting:** Chapter 8 Standing Rules provide for General Meetings with votes by the SKP members attending the rallies that determine the officers and official Bylaws and Standing Rules of our Chapter. Consequently, the Chapter can rise or fall on what a minority of the overall membership decides at the end of each Rally during the General Meeting. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Vice Presidents become the Wagonmasters over three consecutive years... and each Vice President becomes Wagonmaster for a year and then President

for the following year. Unfortunately, too often there is only one candidate for a given Vice Presidency and having more candidates gives the members a meaningful choice in future leadership. For 2019, the President has pledged to present an illustrated PowerPoint presentation of how the Chapter works, what attendee votes really mean and entertain ways on how the Chapter can be made better.

8. A significant number of caravanners left the caravan before the General Meeting:

The survey revealed that the prime reason for leaving early was to avoid the “power politics” that were going on behind the scenes unbeknownst to the Wagonmasters.

Clearly, Chapter 8 is all about an opportunity for SKPs to learn to safely and happily explore and

interact with the warmhearted people of Mexico and benefit from heartfelt giving to worthwhile Mexican charities something of value. It is a privilege to lead a merry band of well-intended tourists to Mexico... to make this small step toward better international relations, better tourism and better charity into a bitter egocentric power play is contrary to the spirit of Chapter 8 Mexican Connection.



Interacting with the warmhearted people of Mexico is one of the many pleasures of traveling with Chapter 8. Photo by Jean Pedersen

9. Most adverse comments centered around Charity issues:

The most common complaint was that attendees believed that their active participation was not welcome by the Charity Committee. Suggestions for improvements included a suggestion that margaritas before the auction should not be so potent... and the auctioneers should not have a margarita until after the

auction was over. One positive suggestion was that the Chapter should have a project that attendees could do with their hands instead of their pockets. In that regard, the Rolling Rally is planning to build a shade structure for an impoverished local school. The structure will be designed by Mike Pabloff (of the family that owns *La Jolla* Beach Camp) and ex-pat Americans with houses on the Pabloff property will pre-fabricate the structure before the rally arrives at *La Jolla*.

10. **The overall opinion was that the live auction went on far too long:**

It has been suggested that the live auction be limited to approximately two hours. The Rally Advisory Group and the Charity Committee will explore ways of maximizing the charity benefit to recipients while giving donors a better sense that their donations were appropriately valued. Comments of those who donated significant items to the silent auction were particularly disappointed that the price they paid for the item in the silent auction was far more than the winning bid. This is a conundrum that will be investigated more deeply and commented upon in the future.



The live auction contributed to the nearly \$10,000 Chapter 8 members raised during the Wine to Whales caravan. Photo by Bob Pettit

11. **Many attendees wanted more of a voice in where their charity donations went:**

It was suggested that there could be a collection container for each charity and that each time someone is the high bidder at the auction, the high bidder would put the amount of the winning bid in the charity container of his/her choice.

12. **Many donors would like guidelines on in-kind donations:** There will be a list of items that can be purchased (preferably in Mexico) of items needed by local charities. There is also a need of volunteers to sort these items into groups that will be donated to specific charities.
13. **What skills are needed to donate labor to the school building project:** Architect Mike Pabloff has designed the school structure so that no skill set is required to help erect the structure. It is only requested that donors work two of the four days to complete the structure or help in other charity related projects.
14. **Eliminating Charity Committee challenges:** Historically, the Charity Committee was not active until after the Rally began. There are Standing Rules as to the composition of the Charity Committee, which can be kept intact by selecting the Charity Committee Chairperson and Charity Committee Members early. They could then confer over Charity issues over the internet before the rally begins. A functional early committee would be beneficial in guiding donors to a more useful pattern of giving.

The Wine to Whales Baja Caravan received far more kudos than anticipated for such a complex caravan for which your 2018 Wagonmasters are filled with both humility and gratitude. For all that went well, it is important that we all learn from the mistakes that we have made and from the overwhelmingly positive comments of those who took the time to fill out the survey... for in there is the stuff of making next year's rally all the better.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to serve...

Ed & Kassandra Dennis

Wagonmasters 2018 Wine to Whales Caravan

2019 Rolling Rally Bulletin #2



By Cassandra Dennis

iHola amigos y amigas!

This will be your last newsletter before the 2019 Rolling Rally signup begins on September 1, 2018. Therefore, it is time to answer some of the questions that I have received from SKPs eager to join the Rolling Rally and clarify the registration process at the same time. Please also reread the [Rolling Rally bulletin #1](#) to mark your calendar for dates and locations as needed.

And, yes, due to pre-signup indications, it might be a good idea to be at your computer on September 1st when signups begin promptly at high noon CDT. The registration form is scheduled to be up one week prior on the website so you can familiarize yourself with the questions that need answering.

Camping at Potrero County

Park: The electric/water spots will first go to “special volunteers” in the order of how much time they have dedicated to making Chapter 8 and, particularly the Rolling Rally 2019, a success. This will include some Board Members, all Group Leaders, the Parking Chairperson, and other special volunteers.

Without volunteers’ teamwork, a rally of this magnitude would not be possible, especially at Chapter 8 rates. Of course, everyone on the Rally is a volunteer to some degree, but special volunteers go above and beyond! If you choose to sign up for special volunteer duties be prepared to arrive at Potrero County Park 2 – 3 days before the rest of the attendees. The cost of the “early bird” camping for special volunteers is covered by the Chapter in appreciation for stepping up for the benefit of all. The remaining electric & water sites (Potrero County Park has a total of 36 electricity & water sites) will go to those in the order in which they have signed up. The remaining rigs will be dry camping for the four nights we will be there.



The railroad museum and century-old historic stone store in Campo make for an interesting side trip from Potrero County Park. Photo by Jean Pedersen

Camping at Zoológico Parque del Niño Jersey in the Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico:

Everyone is dry camping for four nights at *Zoológico Parque del Niño Jersey*, but there are excellent hot showers, restrooms, and picnicking facilities available. The Parking Crew will separate solar rigs from generator-only rigs, which have to be placed further from the zoo animals.

Camping at La Jolla Beach Camp, Punta Banda, Ensenada, Mexico:

There are 10 spots with 15amp electric (good voltage) available at La Jolla. They are not beach front but located on the second row. Since we will be there nine nights, people with medical needs will have first choice for electrical hookup with special volunteers having second choice. There are approximately 35 beach front sites available with priority given to special volunteers followed by signup sequence. Again, we will have separate solar and generator only sections. We encourage you to consider purchasing some solar to keep generator hours down and make the beach experience nicer for all. If you are an extreme generator user (more than 4 hours a day), this rally will NOT be for you but we look forward to seeing you on future rallies. If you are a prolific generator user (but still under 4 hours) you most likely will be parked away from the others so as not to disturb your neighbors with fumes and noise. The Parking Chairperson may direct you to move to a more remote parking spot at his/her discretion.

Please keep in mind that the temperatures should be moderate during our visit. No air conditioning will likely be needed. In the many



The view from the first row at La Jolla Beach Camp spans the width of All Saints Bay surrounded by mountains and the busy city of Ensenada in the distance. Photo by Bob Pettitt



The front row at La Jolla Beach Camp is steps from the beach. Photo by Bob Pettitt

times we have visited this area, we have not needed A/C or added heat. Picturesque Potrero Park is up in the hills so bring some warm clothes for layering. Also, a good wind breaker is always a good idea for Pacific Oceanside camping. A Rolling Rally jacket will be included in your registration fee.

Since Mexican camping will mostly be dry camping, we will go over good boondocking practices and give some educational information for all who wish to attend at the beginning of the Rolling Rally. We will cover ways to conserve water and electricity and go over safe battery charge/discharge practices.

Water and Dump: We will have access to deliciously fresh well water at Potrero Park and a modern dump station. We will all fill up our fresh water tanks and dump before heading across the border to our second rally stop. At *Zoológico Parque del Niño Jersey* water fountains are available in the park but not for filling RV water tanks. Additional reverse osmosis water is available in town for filling portable containers. No dump station is available for these four nights. A dump station is available at La Jolla Beach Camp. Also, a honey wagon and a potable water (reverse osmosis) delivery truck is only a phone call away for a small fee when a minimum amount of rigs need filling.

Showers: All three campgrounds have hot showers available.

Food: Bring some food for a potluck or two at Potrero County Park, otherwise please shop in Mexico to support the local economy. You will find modern grocery stores like Costco, Smart & Final, and Walmart in the city of Ensenada and plentiful grocery stores of all



2019 Wagonmaster Cassandra Dennis gives instructions to rally goers during a stop on the 2018 Wine to Whales caravan. Ask questions and share information. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

sizes with everything you need near our second and third campground locations. Street vendors also offer a variety of delicious fresh food.

Border crossing: Remember to leave your guns, ammunition, tasers, recreational drugs, etc. at home or rent a locker near the border as they are absolutely forbidden in Mexico! A moderate amount of food of any kind in your refrigerator should be okay. You are allowed to bring up to three liters of liquor or beer and six liters of wine per adult into Mexico. However, you may not bring extra gasoline or diesel across the border. You may bring empty fuel containers and fill them in Mexico, but extra containers filled with fuel are not permitted. You will find ample American top tier gasoline and Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel at ARCO, BP, Shell, and Chevron stations in most of Baja California.



Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Yes, your household pets are welcome to come on the Rolling Rally. You will need a health certificate (not older than 10 days from border crossing date). Most vets will fax/email this to you for free, some will charge a small fee. No one had to show proof last year. Dogs will have to be on a leash in Mexico except for beach time. ([see pets on page 24](#))

Your passports need to be current through September 2019 (approximately six months past the likely reentry date). We will all need an FMM tourist card for our trip into Mexico. Please do NOT purchase your FMM before arriving at Potrero Park. We have scheduled time with your Group Leader to cross the border during our stay at Potrero to go get the document. This will also be part of a group outing and involve other highlights and sightseeing in Tecate. This will be a good time to get to know your Group Leader and others in your group. Please be advised that some of our group outings will

require walking up or down a slight hill and for distances totaling about three quarters of a mile.

How much change should I bring?

Mexico is a cash economy, personally we recommend taking \$1,000 to \$2,000 along per rig. You will have the opportunity to get pesos in Tecate in exchange for your cash dollars and or at an ATM with good rates. Your Group Leader will show you the way. ATM machines and exchange banks will also be widely available in the greater Ensenada area. Many places also accept good old U.S. greenbacks... but you most likely will get a better price paying in pesos. Actually, using a foreign currency can be a fun experience. At the exchange rate in early July 2018, you will get 1,953 pesos for a \$100 bill.

Please bring your **toad**, it will give you the freedom to be independent and go exploring on your own or invite others to carpool with you. If you do not have a toad, do not despair, we have always found a ride for everyone. You are also welcome to bring your ATV or off-road vehicle. While you are not allowed to ride them on beaches near Ensenada, there is a trail near La Jolla Beach Camp with great ocean views and fun exploration.

Mexican liability insurance is mandatory! In fact, a non-Mexican citizen is in violation of the law if there is not a driver with liability insurance from a Mexican company. Please read about insurance options on www.mexicanconnection08.com. In Mexico you have the option to insure your "driver's license," which means that you are covered driving your vehicles, a friend's vehicle or even a rented ATV.



Cindy Pettitt exchanges U.S. dollars for Mexican pesos in February 2018. The sign shows rates for buying ("C" for comprar) and selling ("V" for vender) pesos. Photo by Bob Pettitt

Insuring your driver's license is the least expensive and most valuable Mexican liability insurance we know of (Less than \$200 for two adults for one year). Full Mexican coach and toad insurance coverage can be very expensive. Progressive insurance is one of the few companies that extends full coverage to Mexico (except for mandatory Mexican liability!) and Canada at no extra charge. Make sure to activate your insurance before crossing the border and allow for extra time on the policy to explore on your way back to the United States.

Safety: We will once again travel in groups of approximately six rigs, each having a Group Leader and a Tail-gunner. Each group will have 30 minutes in between the next one to allow for a smooth traveling experience. Remember to leave plenty of room between rigs so that the locals (who generally exceed the speed limit) can pass safely. We travel at or under the posted speed limits since we are foreign drivers with generally larger rigs.



Rolling Rally participants will travel in groups of about 6 rigs. Everyone is encouraged to bring their toad vehicles to make it easier to explore the various areas we visit. Photo by Ed Dennis

A CB radio with an outside antenna is mandatory for safe communications during the Rolling Rally. Not all antennas require drilling of a hole such as the "[Midland 18-258 glass mount CB antenna](#)." The antenna is glued to the outside of the window and the receiver cable is glued to the inside of the window. This will also work with a handheld CB that accepts an outside antenna. Wilson also has a [tri-band glass mount](#) antenna for only \$49.99. While we will do a CB check and tuning at Potrero County Park before crossing the Border, you will need to purchase and install this before reaching Potrero since no stores are available near the park. The CB is important because it allows for continues communication between the entire

group while traveling. Cell towers are infrequent in Mexico and thus unreliable communication while traveling. ([see CB on page 30](#))

Both campgrounds in which we will be staying in Mexico have security fencing and a 24/7 security guard on duty. It is our intent that the entire Rolling Rally route be safe for your travels in Mexico. We have direct contact with the Mexican Secretary of Tourism, which dispatches the "Green Angels," who are mechanics in trucks with tools, fuel, etc. paid by the government to help tourists at no charge.

Road conditions: If you are longer than 40' you might want to choose which way to drive up to Potrero County Park or you might have to straddle the lane as some roads get a bit curvy. The roads from Potrero to Ensenada are mostly newly paved with shoulders and all in excellent condition. There are a few deep pot holes in the city of Ensenada due to heavy city traffic. There are a few kilometers (yes, Mexico is all metric) outside of Ensenada with potholes and somewhat narrow lanes on the road to La Bufadora (North America's largest ocean "blow hole") where La Jolla Beach Camp is located.



La Bufadora is North America's largest blowhole. While the most impressive splashes are timed with the tide, water spews every few minutes. Photo by Jean Pedersen

Phone and internet: We encourage all of you to call your phone provider before you cross the border and turn on the international roaming option. This most likely will not cost extra or can be purchased for a small daily fee. The same goes for your hot spots.

You need to do this BEFORE crossing the border.

Maps/Directions: We encourage all of you to print out detailed directions to each Campground location early on and bring these with you. Please bring these printed google maps to our first Group Leader meeting so we can go over our travel route together and mark stops as needed. We will provide one Baja California travelers book per rig (by Michael and Terri Church) and one detailed Ensenada city map per rig with your registration package.

Politics/Religion: Since Chapter 8 is neither chartered as a religious nor a political organization, it is especially appropriate while traveling in Mexico to not make religious or political waves.

Obviously, you are welcome to your own beliefs and sharing them openly in the United States or traveling with friends in Mexico as you choose. However, please

be courteous, respectful, and sensitive to Mexican customs, sensitivities, and religious heritage while being a guest in their country. While most Mexican people will not initiate conversations on political beliefs, the current sensitive situation between our two countries calls for a concern for caution. Many respectable Mexican people we know will feel disrespected by media rhetoric that speaks of Mexican immigrants in particularly demeaning ways. Over the last several years we have noted Mexican Connection members who chanted, "Build the Wall, Build the Wall, etc." and one who defiantly displayed an oversized "Trump Flag" and a rash of companion bumper stickers on his rig. We are in Mexico to explore and observe... which



Mexicans gather and mingle with tourists at the plaza in Tecate. Part of the Mexican adventure is to see the world through their eyes. Photo by Bob Pettit

does not mean we have to agree with anything. Part of the Mexican adventure opportunity is to see the world through their eyes... if only to reaffirm the convictions you had before you crossed the border. What you keep in your head is your business.

The **Rolling Rally Registration Form** will be [posted online](#) approximately one week prior to signup opening at 12 noon CDT, September 1, 2018. As it was last year, the registration form will contain all the latest information, rally costs, volunteer preferences, etc. Please bear in mind that our final pre-rally scouting trip won't occur until December 2018. Chapter 8 Wagonmasters have learned over the years that a final scouting trip within a month or so of the actual Rally is the most valuable precaution. Planning a Mexican rally a year in advance requires some flexibility not only from the Wagonmaster but from attendees as well. If, as the rally progresses, costs are higher or lower than anticipated, the Treasurer and the Wagonmaster will minimize some things a bit or add extra fun things as necessary.

Once we receive your registration we will send you a confirmation that your spot on the Rolling Rally is secured or that you have been placed on the waiting list. Life happens... and cancellations do occur. You will receive more Rally specific information during the following months including a check list and other helpful travel hints.

Bring your cheerful attitude and be prepared to travel with a great team. Have fun and be open to explore something new amid warmhearted Mexican people in a fun and safe environment.

Kassandra Dennis

Wagonmaster 2019 Rolling Rally



A busy Tecate street looking up the hill to the U.S. border crossing. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Bringing a Pet to Baja California



Pepper enjoys a sandy romp on the beach of El Pabellon RV Park in San Quintín, Baja California. Dogs generally roam free in Mexico. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

By Joseph M. de Leon

More than a dozen dogs joined the [2018 Wine to Whales Caravan](#), adding another layer of fun to the rally. There are many wonderful places in *Baja California* to explore with your dog in 2019. There are also places in *Baja California* not suited for dogs. Using good judgment and being prepared are the keys to enjoying the caravan while not being a nuisance.

Our favorite places for our dog, Kimbo, were the various beaches we visited during the 2018 rally – especially *La Jolla* Beach Camp where 2019 Rolling Rally participants will camp for 9 days. While sand is impossible to easily remove from a dog's coat, the wide open spaces, beautiful scenery, and relative privacy make many *Baja California* beaches a welcome place to exercise dogs.

[Potrero County Park](#), the starting point for next year's rally, offers many coastal live oak trees, grassy fields, and rocky hillsides perfect for hiking with dogs. Poop bag dispensers are available and trash cans are easy to find. Dogs are required to be on leashes.



From left, Tater Tot, Kimbo, and Happy Camper take a break at Rancho Santa Inéz near Catavina. Little shade and rocky soil made it hard on some dogs. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Not all of the destinations will be pet friendly. Many places in urban Mexico lack the safety features that almost go unnoticed in the United States. Sidewalks in *Tecate* and *Ensenada* are often uneven or surprisingly narrow, street signs or suspension cables placed in the oddest places. There are no dog parks and few grassy fields. The *Baja California* countryside is a rugged, thorny place where extra care is needed to ensure paws and muzzles stay intact. See pet info in the survey article on page 10.

At the [Zoológico Parque del Niño Jersey](#) in *Valle de Guadalupe* where 2019 Rolling Rally participants will spend 4 days, dogs must be kept away from the zoo animals – especially the wolves, whose pen face the parking area where rigs will boondock. Fortunately, a tree lined field is available for dog exercise across the parking lot and away from the zoo grounds.



Playing in a field near the parking lot kept dogs from spooking zoo animals. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Village dogs abound

Mexico is a free-range country, meaning livestock legally roam anywhere. That includes village dogs, what Americans might consider stray or lost pets. Very few people in Mexico keep their dogs leashed or inside homes. Expect to see a lot of dogs roaming around.

At first, I imagined them to be packs of dogs prowling for a fight. The opposite is true. These dogs have learned that being friendly and gentle will get them food scraps. They generally do not approach you unless coaxed and if a village dog does get closer than you like, it's easy to shoo them away. They quickly learn who to avoid and who's an ally.

Village dogs can make excellent playmates for visiting American dogs, assuming your dog is socialized. Know your dog's limits. Some dogs in the United States are kept away from learning the ways of the pack, so skirmishes may result, but the village dog pack will usually ignore and leave behind dogs that misbehave. Never approach a chained dog – they are guard dogs and trained to alert the owner of intruders and may attack.



Top: It took a lot of coaxing to get Coffee, a German Shepherd from La Jolla Beach Camp, to come say hi to us. Center: the resident dog wears PJs at El Pabellon RV Camp. Bottom: a seemingly relaxed scruffy dog takes flight after every loud muffler that passes the store where she hangs out.

Requirements for crossing the border with pets by Sherry Pavlich:

An International Health Certificate is required for all cats or dogs traveling with you to Mexico. This is a certificate issued by your veterinarian that must be on letterhead and issued within 10 DAYS before you are entering Mexico. It must include the following information:

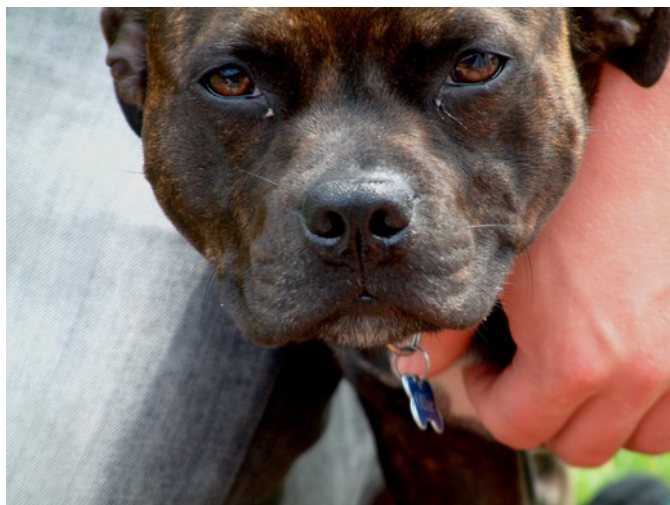
1. The date and expiration of most recent rabies vaccination;
2. The owners name and address;
3. A description of the pet: species, age & sex;
4. That the pet has been examined and is free of contagious diseases;
5. And the veterinarian's license number.

In addition to the health certificate, dogs must also have a certificate showing they have had a rabies vaccination that is current and was issued at least 30 days prior to entry in Mexico.

Both dogs and cats are required to have proof from the veterinarian that the cat or dog is free from internal and external parasites, (tapeworms and ticks), and has been treated in the past six months.

Cats do not require vaccination paperwork, but will be subject to visual inspection at point of entry. Do not be surprised if a customs agent wants to see your dog(s).

You must present the original health certificate and a copy of the rabies certificate at your point of entry. Once you have presented the above information, an Animal Health Import Certificate will be issued to you for your pet(s).



Make sure pets tags have a current phone number. Photo courtesy MorgueFile.com

We also recommend bringing proof of ownership such as registration paperwork with you. All pets are subject to inspection at ports of entry into Mexico and back into the U.S. and may be subject to further inspection if they appear ill.

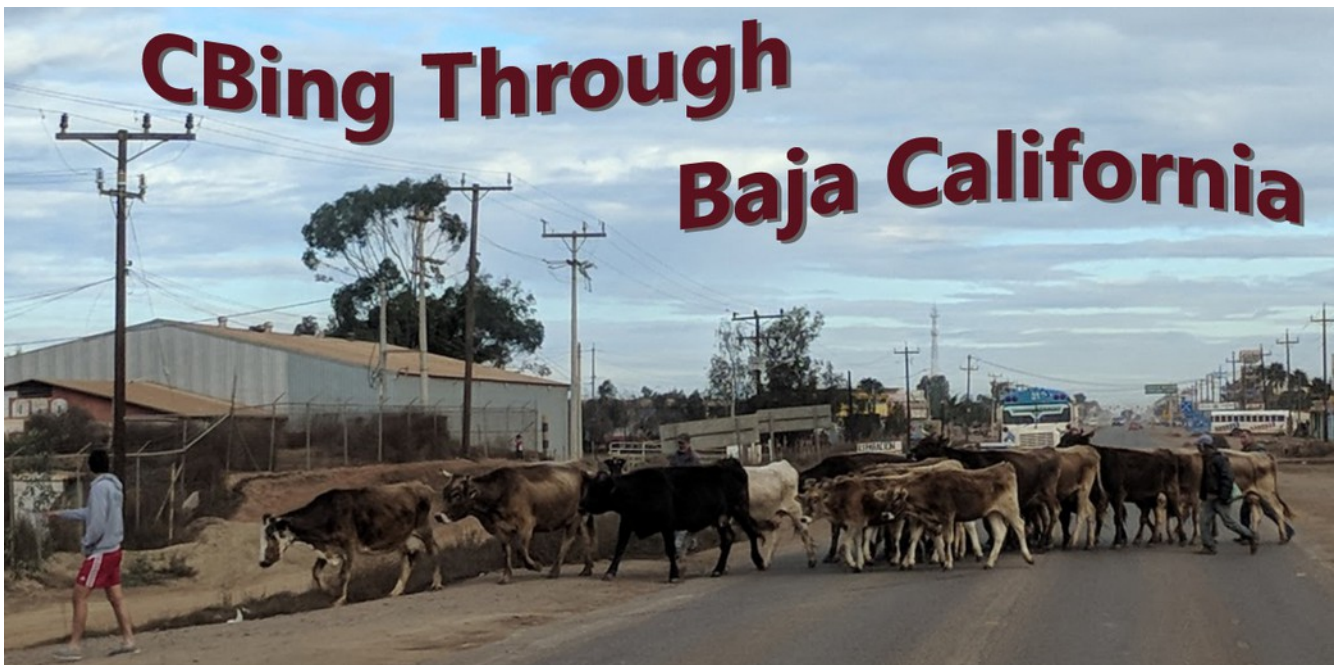
Pets under the age of three months, (that haven't had all their vaccinations), are unfortunately not permitted to travel with you to Mexico.



A village dog greets Don Klein in Bahia de Los Angeles after the Wine to Whales caravan. Photo by Connie Farley

To ensure that your pet enjoys our caravan also, please plan on taking their regular pet food with you, and any medications they might need. Do not assume the same brands will be available even in Ensenada. Please ask your veterinarian about heart worm protection, if your pet is not taking a medication to prevent that, since that disease is transferred by mosquitoes.

Bring an extra leash with you and do not let your pet drink unpurified water, or interact with local dogs who might not be vaccinated. That said, it should be a terrific adventure for us and our 4 legged friends!



Road hazards are common in Mexico. Everything from potholes and hurried drivers to slow moving vendors and cattle can pop up anywhere along the road. Talking with your group via CB offers safety and keeps everyone together. Photo by Jean Pedersen

By Jean Pedersen, Chapter 8 Secretary

This year was my first rally with Mexican Connection and I loved it! It was a rolling rally and we had a number of travel days in small group caravans – 6-7 RV's each. The RV'ers in each small group would meet so the designated Group Leader could pass on any info from the Wagonmaster. Many group members ended up becoming good friends and socialized often as a group. In addition to having an effective method to pass information to and from the Wagonmaster, small groups were the best way to travel rather than in a solid 40-rig caravan, which makes passing by the locals difficult. Also 6-7 rigs span a short enough distance from the first rig, the Group Leader, to the last rig, the Tailgunner, for everyone to hear each other on the CB radios. When we communicated via CB, the protocol was to begin your transmission with your rig ID. For instance, since I was No 3 in the line up, I'd say, "No. 3 to Group Leader. Did you hear 6 say that they were delayed at the last traffic light?"

The first rig, our Group Leader, was in charge of saying "Pot Hole" or "Big Pot Hole!" or "Oncoming cars!" or "Cows!" to warn the rest of us. Many rigs would move over the center line to avoid pot holes in our lane until a car would approach in the other lane. So CB'ing definitely became a big part of all the fun we had because we would pepper these dry informational transmissions with observations of local scenery, friendly banter and jokes on the fly. Every time someone would make a rule about how we "should" communicate efficiently on the CB, someone else would invariably do it differently (dang these independent SKP's) and the variety got to be amusing on our travel days.

I was set up with my CB radio by Jeff at Coach Sounds (aka [Magic Mist Car Wash](#)) in Yuma, AZ. He screwed in a mount for a flexible antenna into the car frame around my van hood and ran a cable from it into my van cab to a Uniden CB radio model PRO 510XL, which I placed in a cubby on my dash. Easy peasy for \$181 plus tax. Jeff is really good at getting the right set-up for your particular vehicle and need.

All-in-one Cbs, which include a portable handset, base, and antenna, are popular for those who don't plan to use it outside of the caravan. Those include the [Cobra HH Road Trip](#) and the [Midland 75-882](#).



- Travel in groups of 6**
- CBs need external antenna**
- Radio check at Potrero**
- Start transmission with your assigned number**
- Keep transmissions short and on topic**



Photos by Jean Pedersen

RV Vagabond Jerry enjoys Baja California

by Jerry Dixon

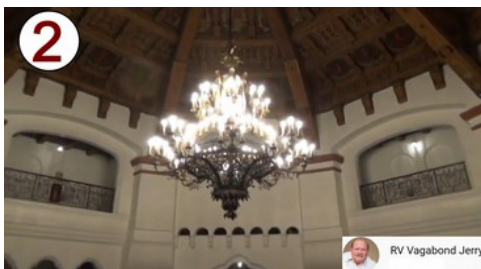
I've been fulltiming in my motorhome since September 2016. My motorhome has been in 27 states so far and I'm spending this summer in Canada and Alaska. You can watch more than 300 RV education and travel videos in my ["RV Vagabond Jerry" YouTube channel](#). Here's some videos I made from the 2018 Wine to Whales trip. Click the image to play the video on YouTube. Enjoy!



Highlights from the 21-day Wine to Whales caravan from Potrero, CA to Guerrero Negro, Mexico.



1) Zoológico Parque Del Nino Jersey in Guadalupe, Mexico



2) The History Museum of Ensenada, Mexico



3) La Jolla Beach Camp during an 8-day stay on the 2018 Wine to Whales caravan

4) Video of the fun and frivolity of the Ensenada Carnival Parade



5) A hike on Rancho Santa Ynez and exploring the Rock Paintings Park at Catavina

6) Whale watching tour in Guerrero Negro, Mexico

Arte por todos lados

(Art Everywhere)



A hypnotic face adorns an abandoned store in Bahia de Los Angeles. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

By Joseph M. de Leon

If art is the soul of a place, *Baja California* bears its heart in a riot of color, form, and style as diverse as its people, as raw as the landscape, and as rich as its centuries-old traditions. Here, art comes in many forms, from gritty street art to colonial architecture to hand-made crafts. Look anywhere and art stares right back at you.



No rats, cats, goats, or rabbits on the island. Photo by Connie Farley

Public art can be seen throughout *Baja California*, from the ritziest tourist areas of Ensenada to the dusty side streets of *Bahia de Los Angeles*. When an artist works their craft into the public eye, a special convergence of space and personality come together.



A rusting metal shark serves as a tourist trap on the boardwalk of Molino Viejo in San Quintín. Photo by Bob Pettit



Clockwise from top left: Whale shark, metal and stone, Bahia de Los Angeles; Flame, metal, Centro de las Artes de Ensenada; Sailboats, metal, Bahia de Los Angeles; Figure, whale bone, metal, Ensenada. Photos by Joseph M. de Leon



A church in Tecate displays the iconic Virgen de Guadalupe, a symbol of faith throughout Mexico. Photo by Bob Petitt

Architecture wraps surface over structure to make both form and function. Whether it's 100 years old or made yesterday, the materials and construction speak volumes about the designer.

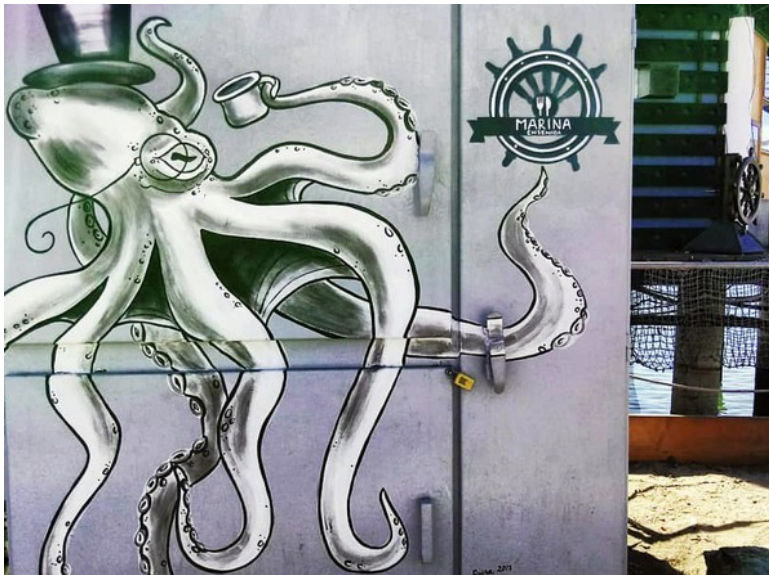


Recycled materials are used at winery Estación de Oficios, aka La Escuelita (the Little School), in Valle de Guadalupe. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon



A boy draws an anchor-tipped arrow while the wildlife of Baja California – desert big horn sheep, golden eagle, and vaquita marina – stand at his shoulder. A constellation is etched in the boy's hair and a pop art background depicts sea life in Bahia de Los Angeles. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Street art comes straight from the heart. From murals and graffiti to stickers and wheat paste posters, artists demonstrate artistic skill and sheer gall. It's everywhere, and *Baja California* is better for it.



A posh octopus drinks tea on a utility box in Bahia de Los Angeles. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon



A rhino sticker, aka a slap for the ease of application, decorates a post box in Baja California. Photo by Connie Farley

Graphic arts use visuals to push a product or idea. For all the “third-world” name calling many Westerners use to describe Mexico, many Mexicans have a keen sense of business, style, and identity.



Tools of the trade depict a stylish barber logo in Guadalupe. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon

Folk art is one of the great traditions of Mexico. Mixing artisan crafts and storytelling is a human pastime as old as time.



Left: Larger than life puppets used in parades in the Valle de Guadalupe. Photo by Joseph M. de Leon Right: A feminine figure is carved into ironwood. Photo by Jean Pedersen

Upcoming Issue & Submitting Content

Joseph M. de Leon

The next issue of *La Conexión Mexicana*, scheduled in your inbox and on the Chapter 8 website in mid-Oct., is shaping up nicely! Here's what's in store:



- **Amazing food in Baja California** – It's no secret that authentic Mexican food is amazingly delicious. Here's a recap of some of our favorite meals south of the border. I bet you ate more than a few memorable meals on a Chapter 8 rally. [Send in a photo](#) and a short description of what made it so good.

*The food at the establishment that prepared this meal is fabulous. Want to know where you can get a meal like this during the 2019 Rolling Rally? Check out the Fall 2018 issue of *La Conexión Mexicana*.*

- **More art on the road** – Mexico is full of vibrant art of every sort imaginable. We'll feature more of the best we saw. You probably have a photo of art you encountered in Mexico – please consider [submitting it](#) for consideration!

If you have any story or photo essay ideas, I'd love to hear them. Maybe it's a side trip you took. Or maybe you have a different perspective on a topic we've already covered. We're all eager to see something interesting, learn something new, or relive fun moments.

Until next time, happy travels!

Content Submission Guidelines:

Contributing to *La Conexión Mexicana* is easy and can be as long as a multi-page article or as simple as a single photo. Please follow the guidelines below or e-mail me if what you have in mind isn't covered.

1. **Meet the deadline** – Summer 2018: **June 30, 2018**, published mid-July; Fall 2018: **Sept. 30**, published mid-Oct.; Winter 2018: **Dec. 15**, published early Jan.
2. **Make articles lively** – Whether just a few paragraphs or a few pages, write short, descriptive sentences. Imagine you're telling the story to a friend. Write complete sentences and double check you spelled names and places correctly.
3. **Include photo captions** – make sure to write a caption for each photo you submit. Include captions in a text file, using the photo's file name to distinguish each caption. The best captions include the location, names of folks pictured, and offer a bit of additional information not obvious from the photo.
4. **Submit a few files by e-mail** – If you're submitting an article or a few photos, please send to josephmdeleon@gmail.com. Use a subject line that describes the attached files, for example "San Felipe article with photos," not "Here you go."
5. **Consider using "the cloud" if submitting lots of files** – There are many free services available, including DropBox and SmugMug. I'm happy to offer my opinion on how to do this. Alternatively, you can group photos in several e-mails.
6. **File formats** – for articles, Word (.doc), text (.txt), and Rich Text Format (.rtf) work well, or you can include the text of the article in the body of the e-mail. For photos, please submit photos in .jpg format. If at all possible, downsize photos to no larger than about 1 megabyte. It'll make your upload and my download quicker, especially when Wi-Fi is spotty or unavailable.

*If you decide to stay
for Carnaval in Ensenada
after the 2019 Rolling Rally,
expect to see some
extravagant sights!
Photo by Bob Pettit*

