



LA CONEXIÓN MEXICANA
ESCAPEES RV CLUB - CHAPTER 8
JULY 2022 #2

Escapes experiencing Mexico, its scenery, traditions, food, culture and folklore via RV travel while giving back through hands-on charity work and donations.

Chapter 8
Mexican Connection Rally – 2023
“2023 ¡Vamos a Baja!” – Three Exciting
Venues – February 14 to March 8, 2023
This is a 23 Day Rolling Rally PLUS Optional
Add-On Extensions



We are very excited to introduce our “2023 ¡Vamos a Baja Rolling Rally!” If you have ever wanted to visit Mexico, but were skeptical about traveling there alone in your RV, this is your opportunity to not only travel to Mexico, but to travel with a group that has been there many times before. The Mexican Connection - Chapter 8 has 38 years of experience leading groups into Mexico and we will show you how to get the most out of your visit.

Our next rally commences in February 2023. We will meet at Hickiwan Trails RV Park near Ajo, Arizona where we will host a Meet-and-Greet and an Orientation to teach you how to travel in Mexico in an RV. This trip is geared towards RVers who have never traveled in Mexico, but also accommodates those who have. The experienced Chapter 8 members will share their knowledge to make the Rally fun and memorable for all.

Our locations were chosen to provide the best opportunity for both safety and to introduce Escapes members to what Mexico has to offer. You will also learn from others as you mingle

with the local people and give back to the kind, generous people of Mexico with our charity work. Charity, volunteerism, and good times are what our group is all about as we immerse ourselves in the culture of Mexico. This year’s trip will offer full hookups in all three RV parks where we will be staying as well as, for a slightly lower cost, a boondocking option in two of the three parks.

After three days in Ajo, Arizona, we will cross the border in groups of five to seven rigs as we travel to Puerto Peñasco, a.k.a. Rocky Point. A week later we will travel, again in small groups, to San Felipe. At both locations in Mexico, we will enjoy daily excursions to interesting locations as well as spend a day or two performing charity work within the local community. About every third day will be an open day where you can do whatever you want with whomever you want. This will be a very relaxing adventure where you will have the opportunity to experience many points of interest in the areas where we will be traveling.

What makes our group unique is that we are an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization. Everyone chips in to help out with every aspect of the trip which is how we are able to keep the cost of our rallies low while offering a unique and memorable Mexican experience. We have several volunteer opportunities available which will make your trip even more enjoyable.

Our chapter is unique in that we also offer add-on trips at the end of the 22-day rally, whereby you will be given the opportunity to travel further into Mexico in small groups to one of several destinations. This will afford you the opportunity to become more immersed in the many wonders of Mexico, and to enjoy its beautiful blue-sky weather and outstanding sunrises and sunsets. Generally, about 90% of the people who join us on these trips, either stay at our last destination for a few extra days, or travel onto other destinations in Mexico. However, if you



wish to return to the U.S. when the official Rally ends, there is always a group of people with whom you can travel the 2-½ hour trip back to the border from San Felipe.

For more information and to see photos of previous trips and to register for our next adventure, please visit our website mexicanconnection08.com. On our website, you can also join our group so you will be notified via email about everything you need to know to attend our next Rally.

Our Facebook page is where our members discuss details of the upcoming Rally, as well as share their experiences and post photos during the Rally itself. We highly recommend you join our Facebook group, [Escapes Mexican Connection](#), to see additional tips and tricks about traveling in Mexico.

Registration for our February 2023 caravan opens on September 1, 2022 and will be limited to the first 50 RVs that sign up. Last year's trip sold out in 10 days, so we recommend that you continue monitoring our website and our Facebook page for additional information as we get closer to September 1st.

For an overview of what our next rally will entail, click on this link to view a short video of the highlights:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MouzUtVj7WQ>

If you have questions about our chapter or the upcoming rally, you will get the fastest response by posting your questions on our Facebook page. One of the many experienced Chapter 8 members will respond to your question.

If you are not in a hurry to have your questions answered, you can email me, Gary Hatt, the Wagonmaster, at CH8wagonmaster@gmail.com. Please keep in mind that I travel full time and do not always have an internet connection so there may be delays in responding to any emails.

Charity Project 2022

Since charity projects are one of the highlights and focuses of Chapter 8, Mexican Connection, Director of Charities, Nancy Hoult, has written an informative summary of the 2022

rally charity work. Thank you, Nancy.

We had a very exciting year with lots of surprises. We started out at the Zoo where everyone brought "in kind" donations of power and hand tools, food storage containers, extension



cords, work gloves, animal travel cages, zip ties and even a bicycle. Donations valued over \$900! For the last three years the club has been trying to get an X-ray machine for use in the veterinary center of the zoo. Each year there were issues that prevented that from happening. This year we had a club member who is a retired veterinarian specializing in animal teeth and was very familiar with animal X-ray equipment. Dr. Steve Holmstrom got into action at the zoo as one



of the hippos had tooth problems and he was able to give some expert advice.

Dr. Holmstrom and his wife, Laurie, then contacted some of his colleagues and arranged for a complete used X-ray system to be donated to the zoo with a value of around \$4,000. In addition, Dr. Holmstrom is providing ongoing training to the staff at the zoo. We want to thank Dr. Holmstrom and Laurie for making this all come together!

The Chapter 8 rally then moved on to La Jolla Beach Camp just south of Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico. There we gathered more "in



kind" donations with a value of over \$740. These consisted of toys, clothing, school art supplies,



blankets, cleaning supplies, etc. for the Esperanza House, a women's and children's shelter, which was this year's "hands on" project. Our group of over 40 volunteers painted the exterior of three large one-story housing units. Way to go!!! In addition, one of our group, Dana Rensi, a Spanish teacher, donated many Spanish education learning aids and then went back to the Esperanza school several times to work with the children there.



Thanks to Dana and the paint crew for a job well



done! While there, someone noticed the kitchen refrigerator did not work. Two anonymous couples from our group stepped up and bought a new one on the spot! How's that for CHARITY! Thank you.

On other days, some of our members went out into the migrant camps and distributed food and blankets to the needy. It gets very cold at night in



February, even in Mexico. They also went to the site of last year's "hands on" project, a senior citizens home where we had painted and insulated



several housing units. This year's visit was to see the progress on the equipment we purchased last year. The work in the kitchen was complete and



our new vent hood for cooking had been installed. Our new washing machine was working perfectly.



We also left more food and blankets there.

Our big charity fundraiser was the annual Live Auction. This event raised over \$3,300 and the companion Silent Auction brought in almost \$600.

Recommended charity disbursements for 2022:



- \$1,000 to Escapees C.A.R.E. Fund
- \$1,000 to local scholarships.
- \$1,500 to the Esperanza House
- \$3,000.00 to the Zoo project
- \$2,000 to local La Jolla charities



Although the weather was a little cool and windy, we had very little rain. I hope everyone enjoyed helping meet the local communities' needs. We are looking forward to next year and hope to see you there.

Thank you all again, I could not have done it without the help and support from all of you!

A Few of the Many Highlights of the “Heading South” 2022 Add-On Trip

One of the many bonuses of participating in a Mexican Connection rally are the “add-on” trips. After the 2022 rally was over, at least half of the participants continued to travel together. One group went to San Felipe and then to Puerto Peñasco. Another group caravanned south.

Their first stop was San Quintin on the Pacific side of Baja where they had the first of many potlucks.



During the overnight stop at Cataviña, a small town in the middle of Baja between the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Cortez, they took a short hike to see the cave paintings believed to have been made by the Cochimi people about 1,000 years ago.



The yellow, red and blue colors were made from local minerals. Many were so bright and clear that it was hard to believe they were that old



and not modern graffiti.

Driving to Cataviña, the terrain changes



greatly and is some of the most beautiful in inland Baja. There are huge boulders/rocks with cacti and desert plants all along the way.

On the way to Guerrero Negro, Barbara Gray





and Sam Leader’s sideview mirror got clipped by an oncoming vehicle that got too close. Luckily there were many “handy” helpers to create a good interim “fix” before leaving Guerrero Negro for San Ignacio.

Most of the group took whale-watching trips in both Guerrero Negro and San Ignacio. It was such a thrill, but when the whales spouted right next to the boat when they were taking photographs, this was the shot they got. They also



had some wet clothing!



San Ignacio is the quintessential Mexican



small town with a colonial plaza and its 1786 mission church. They stayed at an RV Park close enough to walk to town which was very handy.

The sunsets were beautiful. Paul and Vicki Kinard, the volunteer add-on leaders were the best! Thank you, Paul and Vicki.



The group moved to their final destination, Playa Santispac on the Sea of Cortez, south of Mulegé. The first view as they came over the hill



gave them a glimpse of their home for the next week.



Paul led them on a hike which started with





finding a geocache and teaching some “newbies” about geocaching.

The hike led them to the top of a hill which



gave them great views of the bay and the beach where they were parked.



At most stops there was an opportunity to eat out or visit the local taco stand.



Several people enjoyed kayaking the many



islands in the bay or clamming and then sharing



the clams with the whole group at happy hour.



Day trips included a drive to explore Loreto



and its archways that lead from the plaza to the



malecon and trips into the town of Mulegé with its



pretty plaza and great views from the overlook at



the mission church.



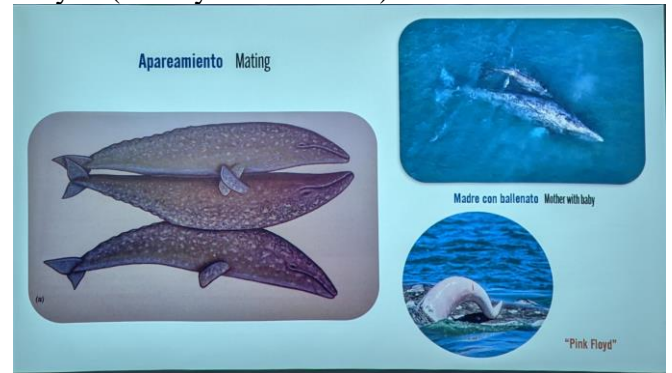
Everyone who went on this add-on trip had a wonderful time. The first-timers said it gave them all the confidence they needed to travel alone in Baja.

Add-on trips only happen if someone steps up and says, “I’ll lead an add-on trip,” so if you have had experience traveling in Baja and have a special place you’d like to share with others, please consider leading an add-on trip for the 2023 rally.

Fun Facts

Besides petting whales, we learned some fun facts about them. A female gray whale needs two males in order to mate. She has to be above water but is not strong enough to hold herself and the male above water. The second male is below her, holding her and her mate above water. The only time someone can be sure of the sex of a gray whale is when the five and one half-foot “pink

Floyd” (as they like to call it) comes out. ☺ It



takes at most 30 seconds to mate. Once she is done mating with that male, she goes on to mate with several other whales to be sure she is pregnant.

Since whales are mammals, they nurse their young but not the same way as other mammals. Their glands squirt out something the consistency of yogurt and the babies eat it when it gets squirted out.

Escapade 2022

Kim Cunningham was our row representative at the 61st Escapade in Lebanon, Tennessee. She said it went fantastically well. Many people took fliers and business cards. She got similar questions: isn’t it dangerous, insurance, breakdowns, what do I need to cross the border. With their questions answered, people seemed more interested. Fifty people signed up for the e-mail sheet. Mexican Connection gives a huge THANK YOU to Kim and anyone who volunteered to help out at the Row and the seminar which had approximately 60 people. A link to see the presentation which Gary Hatt put together for Kim to present at the seminar is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MouzUtVj7WQ>. Thank you, Gary for a job well-done.

Introducing More Board Members:

Jay Hoult is the president of Chapter 8. Although his wife, **Nancy**, is not a board member, she deserves recognition for all her hard work as the organizer for the charity events. Here is what



Jay writes: Nancy and I began our traveling in 1994 with a Gulfstream motor home and annual winter trips to Florida and summer trips around



Michigan. In 2003 we bought a 1993 Safari coach after friends in Florida showed us theirs. We traveled with them for several seasons to Arizona and in 2005 joined them on a three-week Fantasy Tour to Mexico, including the five-day train trip down the Copper Canyon.

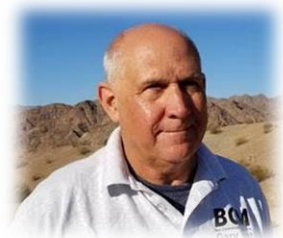
During those travels we heard about Escapees and joined to go on Chapter 8's rally to Los Mochis, El Forte and San Carlos in 2006.

We have been traveling to Arizona every winter and decided to sign up for the 2018 CH 8 rally "Wine to Whales." We enjoyed the destinations, activities, charity work and club members so much, we also went on the 2019 and 2020 CH 8 rallies. In 2021 we joined with six other CH 8 members and went on our own Mexican rally to San Filipe. Our club had another great rally in 2022 and we were there too.

We moved to Mesa, Arizona in 2016 and, after selling our Michigan home, we now travel back to Michigan every summer. We left Mesa May 12 and should arrive in northern Michigan in early July. By time this newsletter comes out, we hopefully will have attended the 2022 Escapade in Tennessee.

Gary Hatt, First Vice President/Wagonmaster

After teaching Computer Aided Design (CAD) classes for Siemens, EDS, and McDonald Douglas for 25 years, in July 2012, Gary became the Publisher of *Bus Conversion Magazine* (BCM). BCM is a monthly, digital magazine that has been providing bus conversion "tribal knowledge" for 29 years and is considered to be the go-to resource for everything related to bus conversions.



Over the years, Gary has owned tents, truck

campers, travel trailers, and motorhomes. In 1997 he bought his first bus, a 1972 MCI MC-7 Combo. In 2000, Gary traded the MC-7 Combo bus for a newer 1983 MCI MC-9 (a retired New Jersey Transit bus), which had larger windows and a Log Cabin interior that he really enjoyed. In 2014, he bought a 1967 Eagle Model 03 bus (a retired Trailways bus), with a larger, more efficient engine, cruise control, and "Jake Brakes" and has been living and traveling in it ever since. The Eagle has over four million miles on it, and Gary



typically puts about 15,000 miles on it every year traveling full-time in the United States and Mexico.

As a full-timer for 27 years, Gary has done most of his own work on his RVs and buses. He also attends and presents at a number of RV and Bus Rallies throughout the United States. Gary can be contacted at

Gary@BusConversionMagazine.com .

Foods in Mexico

It's always fun to try new foods in Mexico.

After seeing someone with **chamango**, I had to try one. It's hard to explain what's in it, but on the web, I found some information which may help. Chamango is a type of sweet and spicy shaved ice or shaved drink prepared with diced mango, homemade mango syrup, chamoy, Tagin and tamarind.



Chamoy is made from dehydrated fruit (in this case mango), chili, salt, sugar and water, with a taste between sweet and acid. Tagin is a blend of chili, lemon and sea salt.



Tamarind is a paste-like, sweet-sour fruit surrounding beans in a pod. You can buy tamarind in many U.S. grocery stores in the produce department. To eat it, break open the pod and suck the fruit off the bean. In the chamango, the fruit has been taken off the bean.



Off the beaten path in Baja California

Just south of Loreto is the turn for the 24-mile scenic drive up a mountain road to Misión San Francisco Javier, built between 1744 and 1758. Because of how well this church is persevered and its beauty, it is considered to be the



“crown jewel” of the Baja missions. It had the first stained glass windows in Baja and has three gold-leaf altars which were shipped from mainland Mexico and reassembled at the church.

The mission is in a small, cute, town with one paved street and a few dirt side streets. There are places to buy a meal but not much else.

An olive tree at least 315 years old near the mission is available for viewing for \$1 per person.



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For more information visit
www.mexicanconnection08.com
www.facebook.com/groups/EscapeesMexicanConnection