

Sister city supporter provides vacation stay for 11 from Ashland

by Kernan Turner Amigo Club

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The view from the Casa Romero beach house in San Pancho, Mexico, offers colorful Pacific Coast sunsets. Photo by Karen Grove photo.

Eleven Ashland friends enjoyed a week's vacation in February in the charming Pacific beach village of San Francisco "San Pancho," in the state of Nayarit, Mexico.

The Ashlanders stayed in the home of the Romero-Siekman family, long-time supporters of Ashland-Guanajuato sister city relations and the Amigo Club. San Pancho, population 3,000, is 28 miles north of Puerto Vallarta, and 4 miles north of the larger surfing town of Sayulita.

Frances “Faffie” Siekman de Romero is the primary benefactor of the Amigo Club’s Guanajuato Nights dinner/auction fundraiser. In addition to matching the funds raised, she donates Mexican items, including as many as two weeks in her family’s San Pancho beach house.

Karen Grove, Amigo Club board member who successfully bid for the house during the last Guanajuato Nights’ live auction, wrote this article about her week’s stay with friends at the house:

Casa Romero is located right on the beach and, with six bedrooms and five bathrooms, easily accommodates 12 or more people. A recently installed infinity pool and deck provide a welcome place to lounge during the day. nearby caretakers provide daily cleaning service and meals upon request.

Although the surf in San Pancho is rougher than in Sayulita, surf boards and boogie boards can be rented and beach walks are sensational. Several Ashlanders also enjoyed birdwatching and a boat trip.

The San Pancho downtown has a variety of shops, cafes and restaurants offering fresh seafood and creative preparations. Casa Romero is a mere 15-minute walk from the downtown area.

The Ashland group was fortunate to be in San Pancho during its yearly music festival, which relies on donations instead of an entrance fee. On two stages in a central park, a variety of Latin, jazz, rock, and folk groups entertained appreciative audiences from 5-12 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. The dates for the festival in 2021 are Feb. 26–28.

The next Guanajuato Nights fundraiser is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 14, 2020, when diners will have the opportunity to bid on the “Casa Romero” beach house for 2021.

Amigo Club Elects Board of Directors

The Amigo Club has elected its board of directors for the 2020-2021 two-year term of office. More than 50 current and prospective members attended the general membership meeting in February that also solicited ideas for the club's direction in future years.

Elected were Betzabé "Mina Turner, president; Karen Grove, vice president; Sean Van Ausdall, treasurer; secretary, Lynn Lamoree; guest housing coordinator, Marina Kendig; Señora Chela Tapp-Kocks, Guanajuato liaison; Catherine Van Ausdall, historian, and board members-at-large, Diana del Rio and Jay Ach.

Pandemic Shuts Down Schools in Guanajuato

Public schools and the University of Guanajuato in Ashland's sister city will close down for 30 days beginning on Friday of this week in compliance with state and federal orders seeking to combat the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-10) pandemic. Guanajuato State has 1,606,717 students of all levels attending 12,215 schools.

Ashland Little League Postpones Games in Mexico

The fifth annual Sister City Little League Baseball Classic in Guanajuato has been postponed for a year because of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-10) pandemic. Twelve Ashland players and their parents had been planning to go to Guanajuato this month, but decided Monday night to postpone their trip until March 21-27, 2021.

"We're all disappointed, but the same group of Ashland kids will attend next year," City Councilor Rich Rosenthal said.

Beginning in 2015, the Little League Classic has added a new dimension to the 50-year ties between Ashland and Guanajuato.

“The visit is more than about baseball,” Rosenthal said. “It is a vital cultural immersion and educational opportunity. For some, the trip may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”



Ashlanders enjoy a fresh fish dinner on the second-floor terrace of the Casa Romero beach house. On left side, from front to back: Sid Frederick, Liesje Blank, Kathy Tarr, Marisa Stone, Lisa Michelbrink. On right side, from front to back: Karen Grove, Linda Thomas, Laura Panica, Eliot Blank, Teri Coppedge, Leroy Coppedge.