

WILDFLOWER



“Traveling Goddesses” Helps Fulfill a Dream

Branch member **Margo Hinnenkamp** has combined her passion for travel with her interest in women’s spirituality, and created a business called Traveling Goddesses. Margo and her life-long friend, Connie Delgado, accompany small groups of women to the Mexican Yucatan several times a year. Each participant has the opportunity to celebrate her inner goddess while experiencing world-class massage/facials/pedicures/yoga and succulent cuisine. They also explore the local culture, participate in traditional Mayan celebrations, and visit Mayan ruins.



Margo & Connie

Margo says, “Women of all ages participate in these trips and are finding their experiences to be life changing. One of our branch members, **Jean Pinard**, recently traveled with us and enjoyed snorkeling for the first time in her life.”

Here is Jean’s story: Fifty or more years ago, I needed to earn some university credits towards my master’s degree. I had always loved natural science, so an intensive summer session offered on the intertidal zone and sea life sounded great. It was a perfect fit for me. Field trips to aquariums, tidal pools, and fishing boat excursions were fascinating. The textbook and lectures, the scientific categories of sea life just seemed to reinforce information that I already knew. I was the star of the class. At the end of the session, the professor invited me to accompany a group going to the Sea of Cortez on a research expedition. I was wild to go; it seemed to be my destiny. But I had to decline. My little son and daughter were 5 and 6 years old, and I could not bring myself to leave them for an extended length of time. End of dream.



Jean (R) with Paz and other traveling goddesses

It was difficult to believe the abundance and beauty of the sea life among the coral reefs. Schools of shimmering shapes swayed gently with the currents; tiny brilliant fish darted here and there; Barracudas sauntered past. “Juanita, are you getting tired?” Paz would ask. “Oh, never!” I replied. I felt like I was one of the creatures at home in the warm undulating currents of this fascinating world.

Fifty years later, I happily signed up with Traveling Goddesses for a trip to the Yucatan. I did not know there was a twenty-mile long coral reef off the coast of Puerto Morelos, second only to the Great Barrier Reef near Australia. But I was offered a snorkeling experience that took my breath away and somehow fulfilled the longing for investigating tropical sea creatures that I had never satisfied. Paz, our gentle, strong and beautiful, knowledgeable guide, made sure that I saw creatures in every crevice, the magnificent corals, and every color, shape and size of tropical fish.

Jean Pinard, also known as “Juanita Margarita”