



North American Basque Organizations, Inc.

HIZKETA

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Udazkena 2006 Fall

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

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Hizketa & Astero: NABO news on paper and online

This is the North American Basque Organizations' tri-annual newsletter. HIZKETA, Basque for conversation, expresses our aim: to promote and encourage greater conversation and communication on matters of shared interest among all of our Basque communities. N.A.B.O. provides all member clubs with a master copy and asks that they print copies and distribute them to their membership. Supplementing this paper edition is our online Astero which is a weekly email update of Basque news and information. Sign up for this free weekly update and email info@basques.us



NABO President's Message

I would like to express my gratitude to the delegates who once again elected me to serve as NABO's president, and also thanks to our chairpersons who continue to serve us all. Furthermore, my thanks to all of those people who contribute to NABO and make it a success as we saw this last summer with the Mus tournament hosted by the Gardnerville club, Udaleku & Kantari Eguna hosted by the Elko Basque Club, and our annual pilota tournament at the Campos's fronton in Fresno.

Not only is NABO continuing to grow in quantity—we now count three dozen members—we are also making significant gains to hopefully improve the quality of what we can offer. This is underscored by our October forum in Nevada where delegates will be gathering to help formulate a long-term plan of where we see ourselves individually and collectively as Basques 15 years from now. The time is now to formulate a master plan that can assist us in helping to coordinate efforts to fulfill our ongoing mission of keeping Basque culture alive and strong in the years to come!



Buffalo Besta: NABO Convention

NABO today counts nearly three dozen Basque organizations as members. Most NABO member organizations are Basque clubs or social organizations, while a few are educational. Our membership ranges from east to west (New York to San Francisco) and north to south (Seattle to Chino). Some organizations are very active while others might just have an event or two a year. Some have larger memberships in the hundreds while some count members by the dozen. For all this diversity, however, we all share the pursuit of a common goal: the preservation of our Basque heritage here in America. And that is what we all gathered to celebrate on the slopes of the Big Horn mountains of Wyoming in the town of Buffalo. For two days in July this town of about 4,000 inhabitants became the home of 5,000 festival-goers who made this a Basque festival to remember.

Buffalo has been a home for Basques for a century. Like many of our shared stories, most Basques found their way there as shepherders so it was fitting that the Big Horn Basque Club choose to make this a Sheep wagon Festival. The Saturday morning parade had three dozen sheep wagon entries. Most all of the local Basque families had a connection to the sheep business, and while hardly any are still directly involved anymore, most have kept a sheep wagon in the family as a way to pay tribute to their ancestors. The streets of Buffalo were lined with thousands of spectators—the whole town seemed to be there along with plenty of outsiders who heard about the Basque festival. The parade came to an end at the city park, and that is where soon the thousands congregated.

For this visitor, and a good many others that I spoke with, the town of Buffalo has a special feel about it. Maybe its the altitude (4,645 feet), its location at the base of the Big Horn National Forest, the wide-open spaces, the old-time downtown), the small-town ambiance, or most likely the people we meet there. Everyone was so friendly, and everyone seemed to be into the festival spirit. As you went through the town there where ikurrinas or Basque flags everywhere. The club there might be small of membership, but they sure did put on a great party! On Saturday the city park was filled with thousands of people, and

most of them weren't Basque. The word is starting to get out--partying with the Basques is a good time! And this is a plus. The participation of non-Basques in our events not only helps us financially, it also lends another crucial dynamic--validation that what we're doing is worthwhile and that it's not just for a select few. Others also are welcomed to take part.

Whereas most Basque festivals are lucky to count one visiting Basque band, Buffalo gave us two! We were treated to some great music with Tapia eta Leturia and their band, as well as the band Ketxo. Other entertainers included the local "Zaharrer Segi" Basque dances, the visiting Utah-ko Triskalariak dancers, and Wyoming's own bertsolari Martin Goikoetxea. The local theater sponsored two showings of the "Last Link" documentary that chronicles the story of sheep herding and features local Basques. Both showings were filled, and copies of the DVD ran out with orders being taken for a hundred more! Part of the proceeds from this film go to NABO's education fund.

It wasn't just all play as NABO delegates did find some time to get some work done. We assembled Friday morning for one of our tri-annual NABO meetings. A special treat was the lunch which featured talks by two long-time Buffalo Basques who told us the story of Basques in Buffalo. We hammered out some new procedural rules to hopefully make our meetings more efficient, delegates shared the latest from their clubs, and work began on preparing for our upcoming Udazken Biltzarra (next article).

I wish we could have stayed, because it sounded like Monday's mountain tour was a special treat. Fifty five people took part in this fishing expedition into the Big Horns. The morning's catch was then served up at a mountain cabin along with barbecued lamb and other potluck offerings. Lunch was followed by Mus and plenty of conversations. That's what makes Basque festivals so much fun--good food, good entertainment and good times.

Catching up with old friends--or making new ones--is what makes a Basque festival a special time. We don't remember whole years, nor whole months, nor weeks nor days. We remember the moments. And the festival in Buffalo gave us plenty of those. If you went, you know what I mean. If you missed it, you'll have another chance next year. We're getting together in Winnemucca the first weekend of June. So come ready for the good times! Thanks to our friends in Buffalo--you made us feel very welcomed and you gave us an opportunity to create some special memories. Here's hoping we'll be back there before too long, and that you'll be able to "Zaharrer Segi" ("Follow the old ways"). Mil esker!



Tapia & Leturia in Buffalo





**NABO
Udazken (Fall)
Biltzarra (Forum)**

Years ago a book was published with the title of "Chorizo, Beans and other things." It was a collection of poems with some illustrations, but it was the title that resonated because it succinctly captured the essence of "Basqueness" here in America. We know what chorizo and beans are. Furthermore we know that these elements of Basque culture seem certain to endure; e.g., one can buy chorizo now in the grocery stores of Boise and Basque beans are famous in the Bakersfield restaurants. No--those things seem certain to continue if for no other reason than they taste good. It's the last part of the title, however, the "other things" that is now our focus. What are these other things of Basque culture, and which do we want to work to preserve and promote? What is worth our time, energy and money?

A culture endures only if one generation succeeds in transmitting key elements to the next. So succinctly the issue on hand for the NABO Udazken Biltzarra (Basque for Fall Forum but a.k.a. the "Chorizo, Beans & Other Things" Conference) is: what do we want to teach our kids about being Basque and how can we best do that?

The mission of the North American Basque Organizations, Inc (NABO) remains the same since its founding over three decades ago--the promotion of Basque culture here in America. But now it is a generation later, and we need to take another look at what this means and how it can be best accomplished. Succinctly, the goal is to get people discussing some ideas about where we see NABO (and our own Basque community) 15 years down the road. Assuming that one wants to see our Basque heritage endure, the task then breaks down into three parts: 1) what specific "other things" does one want to emphasize; 2) what challenges and obstacles stand in the way of successfully transmitting this aspect of Basque culture (e.g., generations separated from the Basque country; loss of the Basque language; multiple options for recreation and affiliation, etc.) and 3) then locating and utilizing effective strategies to meet these challenges (i.e., putting the social sciences to work for us to find ways that work to keep Basqueness alive).

The Nevada weekend gathering consists of numerous items that are all being brought together. It begins with the arrival of three delegations from Basque clubs in Canada and Mexico in an effort to create some joint projects together across these three nations. In Reno at UNR is NABO's first workshop for Basque youth facilitators on Friday. Then later that day is a lecture by the visiting Basque dance expert J.A. Urbeltz. Then next day we shift south

to Gardnerville for our meeting. In addition to regular items, the forum is fortunate to count with the contribution of Dr. Gloria Toticaguena, Director of the Center for Basque Studies, who will making a presentation that day.

While there is no pressing urgency because we don't plan to disappear tomorrow, the time is nevertheless now to begin formulating an effective strategy--and that is where NABO can play a useful role by getting people together from different experiences to share their knowledge. The modest goal of this October weekend, therefore, is hopefully the commencement of a useful inter-club dialogue on the ways that we can more effectively accomplish NABO's mission and by extension, that of our own local Basque organization to keep Basque culture alive. Visit online www.basques.us



**Basque Dance
Expert speaking at
Three U.S.
Universities**

This October of 2006 is set to initiate its first sponsored lecture tour featuring Juan Antonio Urbeltz, an acknowledged leading voice in the world of Basque dance and culture. He will be accompanied by his wife Marian and his son Mikel as musicians. He has played a pivotal--if not the central role--in a virtual revolution in the world of Basque dance: how it is prepared, portrayed, presented and understood. It is a special opportunity for all those interested in Basque dance specifically and Basque culture generally to hear from one of the best. With the generosity of the Basque Government of Euskadi that funded their air travel, with this inaugural lecture series NABO hopes to follow through in its pursuit of recreation + education = perpetuation by helping to provide a means with which to enrich the community--Basque and non-Basque alike--by featuring this leading speaker on Basque dance.

NABO aspires to facilitate a network of shared guest speakers wherein members of Basque clubs--and the general public of course--are cordially invited to attend to learn something of Basque interest, and to do this within the context of these three University Basque studies programs in the three states with the largest number of Basques. These University programs have much to offer us in terms of educating us about the Basques. Furthermore, NABO needs to get out of the shadows to where people see what it is about at the University level as well.

Mr. Urbeltz's presentation will cover defining moments of his career from his early days of dancing with the group "Goizaldi" of Donostia, his transformation of the group "Argia" to his ongoing work

today in the perpetuation and creation of Basque folk dance. He will also be elaborating on his theory as to the origins of Basque dance and the ongoing role played by dance in Basque culture. -Oct. 20 (Fri): Univ. Nevada, Reno -Oct. 24 (Tue): Cal St Univ. Bakersfield -Oct. 27 (Fri) Boise State University For more info visit www.basques.us



**Basque
Chefs California
cooking tour**

Thanks to the support of the Basque Government of Euskadi which funded the airline tickets, and three California Basque clubs that are transporting and hosting them, we are being treated to a cooking workshop by professional Basque chefs! The initiative to have these chefs here was the result of a series of meetings back in January between NABO and Basque Government representatives. The discussions included brainstorming about how to facilitate some new events and to get/keep people coming to the Basque clubhouses. The three California clubs with buildings agreed to host this first-time experiment over the first three weekends of September 2006 (Chino, Bakersfield & San Francisco).

Our two visiting Basque chefs Santi Ramirez and Aitor Etxebarria, both of whom are instructors at the Chefs School of Gamarra (Vitoria-Gastiez, Araba) at their first stop put together some fine food that left the participants super-satisfied. They prepared various "pintoxak," also known in Spanish as "tapas," these bite-size portions of various foods, each with a special twist, can be taken as a snack or combined to make a full meal. Hegoalde (southern side/Spanish) Basques have dinner late, between 9 and 11pm, and often go on a "txikiteo" (bar hopping) sampling pintxoak accompanied by drinks following work and before going home. In recent years this ritual has yielded some extraordinary creations by many tavern keepers. Thus in workshops that went from two to three hours, dozens of these samples were passed among the participants following an introduction of each that included some pointers of how to prepare them. And for the ambitious, recipes were also distributed so they could try to make some at home. See "Astero" at www.basques.us



For more information visit:

www.nabo.us