January planning meeting for reboot of Basque Student Club

“Santa Ageda” Basque singing at Basque Clock (Feb. 2014). As part of our Beyond the Blue-Beyond the Block community outreach program, events at the Basque Block downtown are open to our students. This annual ritual revolves around a series of verses that are sung.

Basque Studies again with Idaho Humanities Council. Idaho Governor Butch Otter has recently appointed the director of our Basque Studies Consortium, John Ysursa, to the board of the Idaho Humanities Council.

The IHC seeks to deepen understanding of human experience by connecting people with ideas, by encouraging civility and good citizenship, and by initiating community conversations about ideas that enlighten us about the past and light our way toward wisdom and a meaningful future. This continues our program’s ongoing collaboration with the IHC set in motion by John Bieter and Dave Lachiondo.
Tribute to John A. Elorriaga. Long-time Basque Studies supporter John Elorriaga was recognized recently for his ongoing contributions. A graduate of Boise State (1949) and previous recipient of the university’s Distinguished Alumni Award and Honorary Doctorate, he has shown a specific concern for Basque Studies at Boise State, helping financially to not only sustain but to grow the program. Eskerrik asko!

“Basque Night with Broncos Basketball.” Come join the game & Basque festivities, including a half-time performance by the Boise “Oinkari” Dancers. Basque player Jeff Elorriaga is finishing his senior year as a Bronco, and its a big Mountain West conference. Bring your “irrintzi” (Basque yell) and “ikurrina” (Basque flag) for this night of fun.
A Look Back at some of our events

Basque Government delegation visit (Feb. 2010). A big part of what our Basque Studies program is able to accomplish is due to the support of the Basque Government (comprised of the historical regions of Araba, Bizkaia & Gipuzkoa). Not only do they provide financial assistance, their willingness to assist with developing contacts and providing cultural and educational materials is also beneficial. Finally, the direct contact with individuals who share the same goals provides a priceless source of energy to keep moving forward.

Our support emanates from two departments within the Basque Government: one is from the Etxepare Institute (founded several years ago to assist in disseminating Basque culture world-wide) that also coordinates shared efforts among the various Basque Studies programs around the world. The second is the Department of Basque Community Abroad (addressing the issues of Basque clubs around the world).

In February of 2014 we received a visit from a delegation from the Basque Country that was comprised by Asier Vallejo (Basque Government Director for the Basque Community Abroad) and his assistant Benan Oregi, who also brought along Inigo Ocariz who is Athletic Bilboa’s scheduling agent. Ander Cabellero who is based in New York is the Basque Government’s official delegate, and working alongside him was Pablo Cano of the SPRI Institute. Then ready to receive them here was also the Basque Government’s intern Miren Perez. They had several days of meetings on campus, including with Engineering department regarding the PhD Scholarship for Basque students there and International Business programs. Then there was “Basque Night” at the Boise State men’s basketball game and their thrilling one-point victory.
Screening of newest Basque-American documentary (Feb. 2014). Basque Studies at Boise State University, in conjunction with the Boise Basque Center, featured a free screening of the newest Basque-American documentary “Basques in the West.” Director Brent Barras introduced the film at the Basque Center upstairs in the card room. This one hour documentary offers the story of French and Spanish Basques and their migration from Europe’s Pyrenees mountains to the American West. Three years in the making, the film brings to life the resolute determination of the Basque people and the influence they’ve had on America’s Western culture. See trailer at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK6GXxD62eA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK6GXxD62eA)

Inaugural “Herria dantzanz” community outreach program (Feb. 2014). As part of our community educational outreach program, Basque Studies has joined in the new Basque Block Thursdays initiative. Every Thursday something is slated at the Basque Block, with free and open to all events.

BERBETAN: “The Rise & Fall of E.T.A.” Boise Basque community members, along with Boise State students, at the inaugural “Berbetan” Basque ideas discussion series as part of our community educational outreach program. The first discussion revolved around a recent article written by Mark Bieter that was published in Boise State’s The Blue Review on “The Rise and Fall of E.T.A.” Leading the discussion was Dave Lachiondo. Here people are listening to the author who joined the discussion via Skype. The series is on the 4th Thursday of each month at the Basque Center.
There’s a real interest on the part of many to discover their ancestry. In accordance with this, a hybrid event was arranged between the Basques and Irish (so of course the event coincided with St. Patrick’s Day) that featured presentations on genealogy research tips. It also embraced the Scots with a screening of the recent documentary film “Gazta zati bat” which profiles the move by Scotland to explore national independence.

This was another campus collaboration event and community outreach program with the events being held at the downtown Boise State facility.
March weekend workshops:
__“Basque Dance in Sociocultural Context.” Instructor Lisa Corcostegi__
__“Basque Cooperativism” Instructor Xabier Irujo__
__“Genocide & Cultural Genocide” Instructor Xabier Irujo__

March: Community outreach

3rd Thursday: “Herria dantzan:” Basque festival dancing
4th Thursday: “Berbetan:” Women & Basque Culture facilitated by Argia Beristain Dougherty

March academic visitors. It was a pleasure helping to host Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter, two professors from the University of the Basque Country, who visited our program. To read more click on [http://news.boisestate.edu/update/2014/03/26/nere-lete-kelly-arispe/](http://news.boisestate.edu/update/2014/03/26/nere-lete-kelly-arispe/)

Tue. April 8th. Basque Studies, in collaboration with the Etxepare Basque Institute, hosted a visiting virtual appearance by author Mark Kurlansky (author of the best-selling *A Basque History of the World*) as a guest speaker lecturer in Dr. Dave Lachiondo’s class on Modern Basque History via [Mintzanet](http://news.boisestate.edu/update/2014/03/26/nere-lete-kelly-arispe/) (Skype-like technology).
Thur., April 10th. Basque Studies of Boise State, along with the Basque Museum & Cultural Center, featured **author Kurt Koontz’s discussing his book “A Million Steps”** (approximately the number of steps from the Basque Country to Santiago along the pilgrimage route dating from medieval times). One of the more popular routes is through the Basque Country; consequently Basques have been commented upon by various pilgrims. But it’s a larger story that the author spoke about.

April. Online publication of Volume 1, Number 2 of the BOGA: Basque Studies Consortium Journal that featured three peer-reviewed articles as well as two special features. This is our program’s ongoing scholarly contribution to Basque Studies.

See the current issue at [http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga/](http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga/)

Boise State University’s Library Special Collections and Archives put together a special exhibit commemorating Bethine Church and **Pete Cenarrusa**, both of whom passed away in 2013. The exhibit includes correspondence, photographs, books, memorabilia and other rare materials from their archival collections.
New book on Boise Basques:

Boise State’s Center for Idaho History and Politics latest research publication is *Becoming Basque: Ethnic Heritage on Boise’s Grove Street*, an ethnic radiography of the capital city of Idaho, which takes into account the diverse origins of its inhabitants, with a special focus on Basque people.

No fewer that thirteen researchers have collaborated in this study, edited by Drs. John Bieter, John Ysursa, and Dave Lachiondo of Boise State Basque Studies that built upon the work of student writers. “This book is about the character of Boise – truly an immigrant city and what it means to be us,” said series editor Todd Shallat.

The book launch was on June 6th, and following a presentation by the various authors there was a book signing on the front porch of the Basque Boarding House Museum. The evening concluded with a concert co-hosted by Basque Studies with visiting Basque guest singers Mikel Markez (from the Basque Country) and NOKA (a Basque women’s trio from Chino, CA)
May. **Nere Lele** lead the monthly "Berbetan" which means "talking" in Basque, because the main objective is to get community discussions going. The discussion including viewing several Basque short films including “Homeland,” and “Euskara Munduan.”

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**Boise State Basque Studies**

*Basque Ideas Discussion*

**berbetan**

*4th Thursdays*

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**Testimonials**

**Student Testimonials**

“Studying Basque at BSU instilled in me a more profound appreciation of language and culture. The university’s Basque courses are challenging and engaging. And Boise, a cultural hub in the Basque diaspora, provides spaces wherein students can meet other *euskaldun*. Through BSU, I was given the incredible opportunity to study in the Basque Country at an immersion Basque-language boarding school. In addition to studying the language, I learned to play a traditional instrument called the *txalaparta*, tasted the local cuisine, explored the countryside, and became close friends with other students who are passionate about learning language. I am deeply grateful to have been given so many opportunities to interact with the beautiful Basque language and culture, both in Boise and in the Basque Country.” ~Dafydd Vaid

“As a student at BSU pursuing a minor in Basque Studies, getting the opportunity to go to the Basque Country was like a dream come true! I was finally able to make connections to things I had learned in the classroom with how they worked in the Basque Country. At Maizpide I was able to learn from some of the most caring
instructors I’ve had, they were always willing to adapt their plan based on what the students in the class needed from them, they even bought us cheese when we spoke of how much we loved the cheese! I count myself among the lucky to have had this opportunity that I will cherish the rest of my life!" ~Renee Rohman

“I had a wonderful time at the barnetegi in Lazkao. In my month studying there, I got to use all of the knowledge that I had gained at Boise State, and I realized how much I had learned in my two years studying Euskera in the classroom with Nere. Being immersed in the culture was a completely different learning experience, I not only spoke Basque, I lived it all day. From breakfast to bedtime, we were constantly speaking Euskera. The community-style meals were an excellent opportunity to speak casually with other students and we got to enjoy the local cuisine. Even when we stepped outside of the walls of the barnetegi we were surrounded by Basque; at the grocery store, the bar, even the signs on the street. Because of the connections that I had in the Boise Basque community with a friend from the Oinkari dancers (who had also attended Maizpide) I was able to attend dance practices with Aurtzaka, a dance group from Beasain. That was a totally different aspect of my learning that happened beyond the classroom—I got to hear the group speak Euskera to one another, I got to practice conversation with them, and I made some new friends! We also had the opportunity to explore some of the surrounding terrain—one night in particular stands out to me. The other students from Boise and I walked to Lazkao Mendi and beyond through the gorgeous countryside, and we got caught in a pouring-down rain storm on our way back. We were able to find a small restaurant on the side of the road, and they welcomed us in, brought us towels (we were soaking wet), and poured us some Sagardoa while we waited for a table. The dinner was delicious and was followed up by a special performance by a bertsolari (singing poet) who happened to be in the restaurant that night. He sang to us personally about how we had come from America and we were learning Euskera—it was beautiful! I would recommend studying abroad to any student who is trying to learn a new language—there is NO replacement for being submerged in a culture—and having to rely on the foundations of what you already know. I feel incredibly blessed to have been able to visit Maizpide—for me it was a dream that came true!

I am very happy that I decided to pursue a minor in Basque Studies at Boise State. It was a unique opportunity for me to be able to get credit for studying my own heritage. My grandmother was a fluent Basque speaker, her parents were from Bizkaia, and she continued speaking Euskera for her entire life. She is in heaven now, but I know that if she were alive she would be proud of my decision to learn to speak Basque. I am excited as well to pass the knowledge I have on to my own children one day—and I can say that without the Basque Studies program at Boise State I wouldn’t be able to do that.”

~Megan Vondemkamp

“My father was Basque and he was born and raised in a small town called Markina in the Northern part of Spain. My father passed away several years ago, and when I went back to school, I chose to honor him by studying the Basque language. I had taken all of the Basque language classes that were available to me at
Boise State, and I wanted to continue to learn. I was told that I might be able to study abroad and would be eligible for scholarships if I declared a Basque Studies Minor. For me, this was a no brainer. I needed 9 additional credits to complete the minor, and 8 of them would come from studying abroad. I jumped at the opportunity and immediately declared my minor. I had to take a one credit weekend class, and then I was on my way to Spain to finish my college education. I spent 5 weeks in the midst of summer in the Basque country of Spain. The town I studied in was Zornotza which was near Markina. These two towns are separated by only 31 kilometers. Due to the close proximity of these towns, I was able to visit aunts, uncles, and cousins that I had not seen in nearly 2 decades. While this was a huge benefit for me, I had many other fantastic experiences. Each evening and weekend we were given an opportunity to experience the culture of the Basque people. We learned some of the customary dances and played some of the instruments that are unique to the Basque culture. We also visited some museums and went on hikes in the Basque countryside to visit caves and other landmarks. In the midst of all of this, we did our best to converse in the Basque language.

The school that I attended had sleeping quarters for the students and all of our meals were included. I met people from all over the world that attended the school, and I am still in touch with many of them and am happy to call them my friends. The instructors at the school were very good and, fortunately, patient with us as we struggled to gain an understanding of the Basque language. The instructors went with us on many of our adventures, and we enjoyed spending time with them outside of the classroom. This was such a fantastic experience for me, and I can’t wait to take my family to Spain and enjoy the Basque culture with my children.” ~Roman Ybarlucea

The Basque Country: Studying Euskara in the Maizpide barnetegi located in Lazkoa is a very fond memory for me. It gave me a chance to really experience the Basque culture outside of the States and to become friends with individuals I normally would never have met in my life. Studying at Maizpide allowed me to fully envelope myself in the language and forced me to become a better and more confident Basque speaker. Furthermore, all of the students and teachers were extremely friendly and helpful. The school also tried to bond the students together by organizing field trips. On three separate occasions we visited an old baserri, climbed a mountain, and were televised on EITB. We all ate together, danced together, sang together, drove together, spoke together, and towards the end became a very close knit of friends. Additionally, the weekends offered me a chance to travel around the Basque Country and visit all the cities and cites I wanted to visit. I made a lot of friends, really good memories, and got to study Basque. I would recommend the trip to anyone.

Basque Minor: First of all, Izaskun Kortazar and Nerea Lete are two of the nicest and genuine people I have met in my life. Both of them have gone above and beyond to make sure that I was not only learning Basque, but that I was having fun and I was comfortable. While in the Basque Studies program at Boise State I felt a closer connection with my Basque heritage. We watched Basque films, spoke the language, ate the food, played the sports, and even laughed in Basque (jejejejejeje). All of the Basque instructors at Boise State are amazing teachers who taught me a lot. Furthermore, all of the Basque instructors I had made everyone feel Basque, and even told people they were Basque during class. During class everyone was engaged in the topic at hand and all the instructors welcomed the students into the Basque culture. I would recommend that every student be required to take at least one class involving Basque culture before graduating from Boise State because the Basque culture has such a huge tie to the city of Boise. Not to mention that those students would be opening their eyes to great food, great people, great memories, and a great language. ~John Cortabitarte
INTERNSHIPS

Previous Boise State interns at the Basque Museum included:
Catherine ALLEN
Jody AULT
Tonya EMONNOT
Tim GUILL
Olivia FINK
Audra HOYT
Alissa PETERSON
Ashley NEUBRAND
Fritz SIEGERT
Earle SWOPE
Sam THOMAS-KUZILIK
Cami TISLER
Kody WOODS

Previous Boise State interns & volunteers at the Ikastola Basque Language preschool included:
Kelsey ALLEN
Cody BEAUDREAU
Itxaso CAYERO
Mariah LELAND
Alaina GAVICA
Annie GAVICA
Renee ROHMAN
Megan VONDEMKAMP