



**50th Anniversary**  
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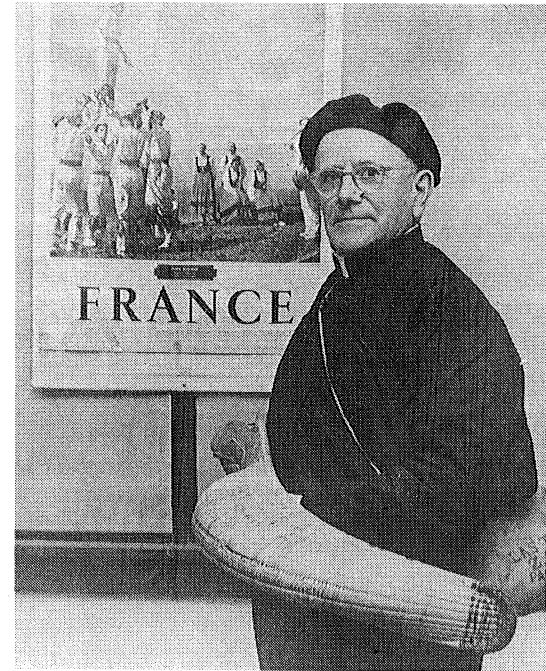


**50th Anniversary  
Souvenir Program**  
of the  
**Southern California Basque Club**



**50th Anniversary**  
1 9 4 6 ~ 1 9 9 6

## Dedication



*This booklet is dedicated to Father Charles Espelette whose foresight and inspiration was responsible for the establishment of the Southern California Basque Club. Due to his meticulous record keeping, we are able to share with you the fifty year history of our club and of the Basque culture in Southern California. On behalf of the membership, we thank him and the eight other Charter Members for passing on their strong pride and respect for our heritage.*



50th Anniversary  
1946-1996

## Southern California Basque Club

12475 Central Avenue, #440 • Chino, California 91710

September 28, 1996

On behalf of the Southern California Basque Club, I would like to welcome everyone to our 50th Anniversary weekend and hope you all have a good time. We are very proud that we are the only Basque Club to have held 50 consecutive picnics. We have all our records from our inception on August 11, 1946 and have encapsulated our club's history from those records. We hope you enjoy reading this history later in this souvenir program.

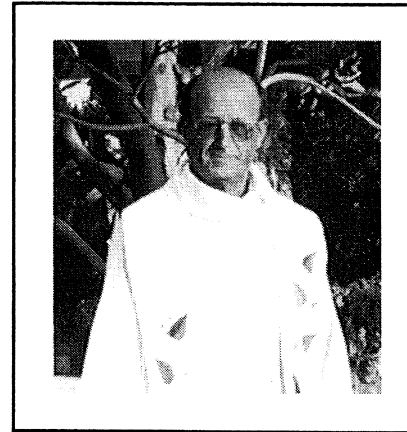
In conjunction with our Anniversary weekend, we are also hosting our first NABO meeting. We are proud to be a part of NABO and welcome all the delegates attending the meeting. We hope this weekend will be a memorable one for you and look forward to sharing ideas about our culture and traditions at future meetings.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to all the individuals and companies who chose to advertise. This makes this booklet, with all our history including the written text and the pictures, both possible and memorable.

Finally, I want to thank all our members both past and present for working to make our Annual Basque Picnics among the best and for continuing the tradition of our forefathers. I would especially like to thank the seven gentlemen who joined me to form the organizing committee for this Anniversary weekend. We know the rest of the membership appreciates the time that this group has spent trying to make everything right. I hope you all have a great time this weekend.

Sincerely,

  
Dominic Etcheberria  
President



Having celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Bakersfield Basque Club two years ago now, we are invited to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Southern California Basque Club on the 28th and 29th of September 1996. Through ups and downs every year this club has invited all its members and friends to get together.

What motivated the Basques with Father Charles Espelette to found this club? The statement of purpose reads: **"It's aim was to promote the social and cultural side of the various Basque families living in Southern California... so that at specified times they could gather together... enjoy a home-coming atmosphere, take confidence in themselves... and on special occasions represent as a group the ancient Basque Race"**.

Men need each other to grow in happiness, every man needs his fellow country men to build a fraternal community atmosphere. 1946 was in the post World War II era with numerous immigrants to the United States after all the deprivations and struggles to survive. The club's goal was to keep alive all the cherished customs of the old country: games, dances, songs, etc., all the folklore which perpetuate our own culture.

Is this not why we like to get together, today, fifty years later? And it is the best way to expose our children born here, our Basque roots and traditions!

I am happy to be with you during these two days primarily to commemorate in my prayer all the late members who are no longer with us as well as to give courage and support to the current members as they pursue the task to keep alive our culture and language.

Long live the "Southern California Basque Club."

**Marzel Tillous, Apeza**

## Schedule of Events

Saturday, September 28, 1996

- 8:00 am**            **NABO Delegate Meeting**  
Chalet Basque, La Puente
- 2:00 pm**            **Gate Opens**  
La Puente Handball Club
- 4:00 pm**            **Handball Games**  
Game 1 Dominic Camou & Rene Almirantearena  
vs.  
Prudencio Arburua & Andre Bello
- Game 2            Oldtimers Match  
Pettan Aphessetche & Agustin Arteche  
vs.  
Xavier Aphessetche & Ganish Iriarteborde
- 6:00 pm**    **50th Anniversary Banquet**  
• Steak and Chicken Dinner  
• Historical Video Presentation  
• "Oldtimer" dance group  
Members of dance groups of the '50's, '60's and 70's  
reunited for your entertainment pleasure.  
Includes past musical accompanyists  
• Gauden Bat Dancers
- 9:00 pm**            **Public Dance**  
Music by: *Mendiko Haurak*

## Schedule of Events

Sunday, September 29, 1996

- 10:30 am** **Gates Open**  
La Puente Handball Club
- 11:00 am** **Basque Mass**  
Celebrated by Father Marcel Tillous
- 12:30 pm** **Lamb Bar-B-Que Lunch**
- 3:00 pm**            **Entertainment**
- Gauden Bat and Dantzari Onestak  
Basque Dancers and Klika
  - Handball Games  
Game 1 Dominic Camou & Raymond Goyeneche  
vs. San Francisco  
Game 2 Denis Petrissans & Jean Michel Indaburu  
vs. San Francisco
- 7:00 pm**            **Public Dance**  
Music by: *Mendiko Haurak*
- Lukainka sandwiches to be sold in the evening.

**Entertainment**



**Gauden Bat Dancers**



**Dantzari Onestak**

**Entertainment**



**Klika**



**Mendiko Haurak**

## Organizing Committee/Officers



Standing: Laurent Arretche (NABO Representative), Gilbert Aldaco, Louie Fernand, Randy Gariador. Seated: Mitch Gariador (Secretary/Treasurer), Dominic Etcheberria (President), Tito Chanchorena (Vice President). Missing: Danny Arretche

### President:

John Lifur	1946 - 1965
John Etcheberria	1965 - 1970
Martin Itcea	1970 - 1977
Ben M. Bidart Jr.	1977 - 1983
Henry Aguerre	1983 - 1990
Dominic Etcheberria	1990 - Present

### Vice President:

Mathieu Etchart	1946 - 1956
Laurent Arretche	1956 - 1965
Ben Bidart Sr.	1965 - 1977
Joe Yzurdiaga	1977 - 1980
Tito Chanchorena	1980 - Present

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Fr. Charles Espelette	1946 - 1959
Joe Changala	1959 - 1977
Henry Aguerre	1977 - 1983; 1990 - 1993
Jean Cihigoyenetche	1983 - 1990
Mitch Gariador	1993 - Present

## Current Members

The following is a list of the current members and their spouses along with the year they were installed as members.

John & Julie Etcheberria	1947
Ben Bidart (Honorary)	1948
Louie & Barbara Etcheberria	1953
Martin & Leona Cihigoyenetche (Honorary)	1961
Martin & Mary Itcea	1961
Jean & Noeline Mocho (Honorary)	1961
Martin & Mary Louise Jaureguy	1966
Albert & Teresa Chanchorena (Honorary)	1968
Wes & Adele DeVol	1969
Ben M. & Susan Bidart Jr.	1970
Tito Chanchorena	1970
Fred & Lucille Guillemet	1970
Mike & Jeannette Bidart	1972
Henry & Liz Aguerre	1976
Arnaud & Edie Cachena	1976
Pierre Chamalbid	1976
Steve & Joan Jaureguy	1976
Jean Cihigoyenetche	1978
Dominic & Suzanne Etcheberria	1978
Martin Etcheverry	1978
Rich & Jeannine Bockstahler	1980
Randy Gariador	1983
John & Mary Bass	1984
Joe & Liz Cenoz	1984
Richard & Cecile Kruse	1984
Joseph & Mary Almirantearena	1985
Dennis & Bernardine Ruiz	1985
Jean & Rosemary Ascona	1986
Louis Fernand	1986
Robb & Bernardette Quincey	1986
Mitch & Delora Gariador	1988
John LaBrucherie	1988
Ken & Suzie Opie	1988
Laurent & Jean Arretche	1990
Joe Bonetpels	1990
Gilbert & Colette Aldaco	1991
Albert Erreca	1991
Pierre & Sharon Mocho	1991
Dino & Christine Otondo	1991
Danny Arretche	1993
Pedro & Darlene Indacochea	1993
Bernard & Joy Arretche	1995
Felix & Cathy Gonzalez	1996
Jesse & Jenny Isom	1996
Joe & Robin Jaureguy	1996
Chris & Mayi Petracek	1996

## 50th Anniversary Honored Members

On this anniversary weekend, the club members would like to honor eight of their long time members. Four were chosen because of their honorary status with the club and the other four because of their years of service. All eight have been instrumental in the continuing success of the club and we would like to express our sincere thanks for all their time and effort to continue the Basque traditions. Listed below is each of the honored members, the year they joined the club and a brief biography.

### John Etcheberria • 1947

Johnny Etcheberria was born in 1919 to Domingo and Bernardina (Irigoyen) Etcheberria in San Juan Capistrano. Actually the family ranch was up in Trabuco Canyon where they were neighbors with the Changala and Segura families. Interestingly enough, Domingo Etcheberria, Pedro Changala and Domingo Segura were raised as neighbors in Valcarlos, Spain and their farms in Trabuco canyon were in the same proximal order as their birthplaces in Spain. Bernardina came from the village of Erratsu and the Etcheberria family raised sheep and farmed in the San Juan Capistrano area for many years. There were five children born to the Etcheberrias and three would ultimately become involved with the club. John served in the Army in Europe during World War II. His future wife was born Irene Juliet Cenoz. She was born in 1927 in La Puente to Epifanio "Epi" Cenoz and Josephine Faure. Her father came from the Pamplona area and her mother, Josephine was from an Italian/French family in La Puente. The Cenoz's operated a grocery store in La Puente. Prior to and after the service, Johnny worked with his father and brother, Louie in the farming business. Eventually, Johnny and Louie would form a partnership that would last over 40 years, farming dry land barley, then garbanzos and later a variety of vegetable crops in the El Toro area. John and Julie were married in 1951 and they have two children, Rosemarie and Dominic. Johnny was President of the club from 1965-1970 and in addition to supervising the bar for a few years, he has been in charge of the tickets since 1957. He has the distinction of being the longest serving member of the club at 49 years. Johnny and Julie are retired and live in Mission Viejo.

## 50th Anniversary Honored Members

### Bernard Bidart • 1948

Ben Bidart was born in 1910 in Ibarrolle, France. He crossed the ocean on the ship 'Paris' in 1930 with Jean Lafaurie. For awhile he worked at the Bruguere dairy in Montebello with another member Cayet Harismendy. In 1934 he met his future wife Lucie Marie Lassa at a party at the Chilibolost Ranch in Carbon Canyon. Lucie was born in 1920 to Martin Lassa and Bernarda Irigoyen. Martin was originally from Premundoinea in Les Aldudes and Bernarda came from Erratsu in Spain. The Lassa's were farmers in South Chino around the Airport and Lucie worked for the Garat family as a housekeeper and cook after graduating from high school. Ben and Lucie were married in 1941 in Chino and had their reception at the Community Building. Ben actually started his first dairy in Pomona in 1938 but in 1948 they purchased property in Chino on Campus Avenue where he grew walnuts, potatoes and corn. In 1951 they built a dairy on the property which became the primary business and they raised their two sons Ben Jr. and Mike there. Ben has been a member of the club for 48 years. He was Vice President from 1965 -1970 and was in charge of the gate for many years. Ben retired from the dairy business in 1969 and later that year Lucie passed away. Ben continues to live in Chino with his son Mike and family.

### Louie Etcheberria • 1953

Louie Etcheberria was born to Domingo and Bernardina Etcheberria in 1923 and is the younger brother of Johnny Etcheberria. Louie also served in World War II although he spent his time on the Pacific front from 1943-47. He was married to Prudence Arbonies in San Juan Capistrano in 1948. Prudence was born in Los Angeles in 1928 and was the daughter of Nick and Carmen Arbonies. Her family farmed in La Puente and ultimately ended up in the Capistrano area. They both danced together in the original dance groups organized by Father Espelette. Louie and Prudence had three daughters, Anita, Carmen and Grace-Ann. Prudence passed away in 1970 and in 1984 Louie married Barbara Weatherhold from the Imperial Valley. Louie has been a member for 43 years. They are still actively involved in the club with Louie serving as head of the kitchen. They are retired and living in San Juan Capistrano.

## 50th Anniversary Honored Members

### Martin Cihigoyenette • 1961

Martin Cihigoyenette was born in 1926 in the house of Handdinia in Arneguy. In 1950, he came to his uncles, the Chilibolost brothers in Chino. He initially worked in a winery in Cucamonga and later for a dairy in Artesia. It was in Anaheim that he met his wife, Leona. She was born in Belgium in 1923. In 1952, Martin and Leona were married and they raised two sons, Yves and Jean. They moved to Chino in 1960 and operated a dairy on Euclid. They eventually moved to the former Chilibolost place in Chino and continued to host Basque functions there including the dance practices for numerous years. Leona operated an embroidery business when they lived in Anaheim and continued it in Chino and was instrumental in providing shirts and aprons for the members as well as the costumes for the dance group. They have been members for 35 years. Martin retired from the dairy business but kept active by working for Rich Bockstahler at Herb's Hardware in Chino for 15 years. Martin and Leona are currently enjoying their retirement in their home in Ontario.

### Martin Itcea • 1961

Martin Itcea was born in Walnut in 1920 to Pablo and Paulina (Zualet) Itcea. His father was from Acpilcueta and his mother from Urdax. Pablo built a house in Walnut where Martin, his brother Alex and his sister Amalia were raised. Martin's mother died in 1926 and the children were raised by their aunt Francesca Larraya. Later Pablo remarried and he and Marie Itcea continued to farm and live in the area of Walnut and Pomona. Martin is married to the former Mary Etcheberria of San Juan Capistrano, she is the youngest sister of the Etcheberria's. Mary's mother Bernardina died when she was an infant and she was raised by her eldest sister, Rose. The couple were both members of the original dance group formed for the picnics in 1947. Martin and Mary were married in 1953 at the San Juan Capistrano Mission and had their reception at the La Puente Handball Club. They have two daughters Bernardine and Pauline. The couple moved into the family home in Walnut and farmed the hills there for many years until they were forced out by development, they then retired to their home in Pomona. Martin was President of the club from 1970 to 1977 and a member for 35 years. The couple has been extremely involved in cooking not only for the Basque club but also for the La Puente Handball Club. There is rarely an event or project done by these two clubs in which the Itcea's are not involved.

## 50th Anniversary Honored Members

### Jean Mocho • 1961

Jean Mocho was born in St. Michel in 1923 at the house of Reculisa. He came to the United States in 1948 and initially herded sheep for Jose Errotabere in Fresno. Later he came to Whittier and was a milker at the Pellesier dairy. He met his future wife Noeline Errecalde at a Basque dance at the "cancha" in La Puente where she was playing her accordion. Both Jean and Noeline were members of the earliest dance groups. Noeline's parents were Jean and Jeanne Errecalde. Her father was from Ainhice and her mother came from Lasse. They were dairy farmers in Norwalk for many years where they raised Noeline and her older sister Jeanne. Jean and Noeline were married in 1953 in Norwalk and they have one daughter, Bernardette. The Mocho's joined the club formally in 1961 and have been members for 35 years but they were really involved much earlier due to Noeline's musical abilities. Noeline played as part of the evening orchestra and accompanied the dance group for many years. In 1955 the Mocho's entered into partnership with Noeline's sister and her husband Michel Plaa in the dairy business in Norwalk. The Mocho and Plaa Dairy moved to Mira Loma in 1970 where the two families continue to reside today.

### Martin Jaureguy • 1966

Martin Jaureguy was born in 1922 in Pomona and was the son of Martin and Catherine (Itcaina) Jaureguy. His father was from the house of Tihista in St. Etienne de Baigorry and his mother was born in Whittier. The Jaureguy's were sheep ranchers based in La Puente. Martin is married to the former Mary Louise Changala, whose parents were Pedro and Marie Louise Changala and her brother was Joe Changala an early member. They were married in 1950, settling in La Puente and they have three sons, Steve, Bob and Joe. Martin ran sheep in the area for awhile then took a job working for the County. Mary Louise has worked for the local Water District for 28 years. They have been members for 30 years. Martin is retired but they manage to spend alot of their time in Oceanside to be close to their children and grandchildren.

### Albert Chanchorena • 1968

Albert Chanchorena was born in Urepel in 1912. He arrived in Arizona at the age 17. He met Teresa Goni whose parents, Jose and Juanita Goni had immigrated to the United States from Eugui, Spain and Teresa was born in El Monte in 1917. In 1944, they were married and they have two children Louise and Albert Jr. (Tito). Teresa and Albert have lived in the Chino/Ontario area for many years where Albert owned a dairy for a number of years. He is most known for his handiwork with wood and many Basque families in the area possess tables handmade by him. They have been members for 28 years and were responsible for making the chilindron for the picnic for many years. They are currently retired and living in Ontario.

### Honorary Spouses

*Isabelle Borgogno  
Marcy Carrillo  
Amalia Changala  
Frances Errea  
Jeanne Harismendy  
Mayie Minaberry*

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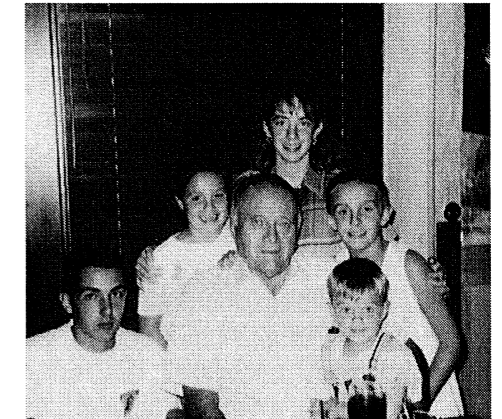
### Deceased Spouses

*Lucie Bidart  
Juana Chamalbide  
Dee Erreca  
Prudence Etcheberria  
Marie Jeanne Etcheverry*

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*A sincere thanks to these women and to all spouses  
who have helped to make this club a success.*



## *Johnny Etcheberria*

*The only man to work at  
49 Basque Picnics*

## *Congratulations Aitachi*

*Love,*

*Joseph, Julie, Dominic,  
Renee and Peter*



With much pride and congratulations to  
our #1 Eskualdun dad and grandpa:

Louie Etcheberria

We thank you for giving us, and  
showing us how to live, our  
Basque heritage.

We love you.

Anita & Don, Carmen & Lynn,  
Grace-Ann & Ed,  
Keith, Scott, Kevin, Erin & Kyle

*Congratulations and  
Best Wishes On Your  
50th Anniversary*

*from*

***THE LA PUENTE  
HANDBALL CLUB***



*In dedication to Mary and Martin Itcea  
for the many countless hours of service to the  
Southern California Eskualdun Club*

*Congratulations on being part of this  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

*The Ruiz and Iriarte Families  
(Your beans are still the best!)*

*Congratulations  
So. Cal. Basque Club  
On Your  
50th Anniversary*



Founded in 1968

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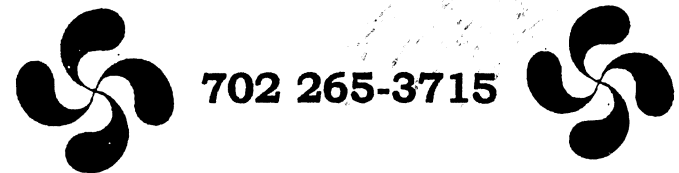
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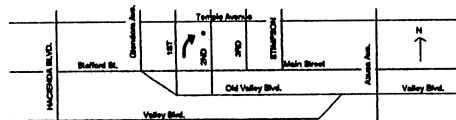
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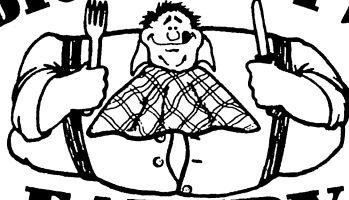
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on its 50th Anniversary!

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---

ARNAUD CACHENAUT

*Dedicated in loving memory to*  
**Dick Ermigarat**  
*who was a member of the  
Basque Club for 30 years*



*From his children  
Kathy, Jim and Nancy*



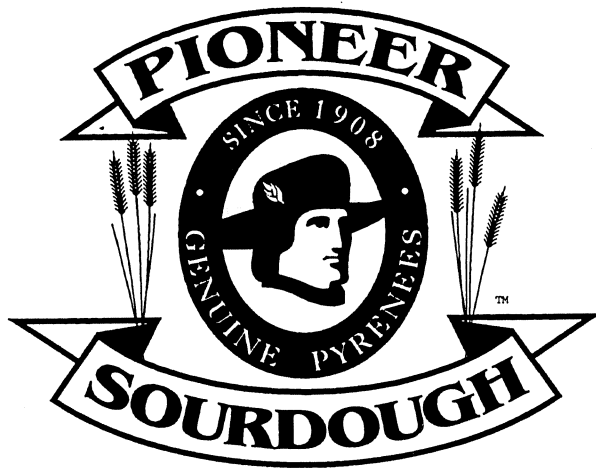
## **Five E Farms**

*We're young, but we're growing!*

*Congratulations,  
Southern California Basque Club  
on your 50th Anniversary!!*

*Dominic, Suzanne, Dominic II  
Renee & Peter Echeberria*

## CONGRATULATIONS



**The Garacocheas  
JACK, JOHN AND JAY**

## 50 years of History and Memories of the Southern California Basque Club

### The Basque People and Early Immigration

The Basque people are Europe's mystery race. Their language is Europe's only non Indo-European language spoken and has no known linkages or similarities to any other languages. They have baffled anthropologists and historians who have attempted to discover the origins of the Basque people. Among many theories, some historians claim that the Basques have always resided in the area of Southern France and Northern Spain and that the people and their language actually evolved from earliest inhabitants there. Written records prove that the Basques were established in their current region prior to the Roman excursions and have survived many attempts to be conquered since then.

The reason for Basque immigration was due to the economic conditions and culture of the Basque country which did not allow for large population growth and the right of the eldest child to inherit the family farm. The children of large families were forced into one of three choices; marry into another house, join a religious order or emigrate. Many chose the latter with the Americas being a preferred destination, including as far back as the earliest explorations of Columbus and Magellan. They were involved in the early settlements of most of the Latin American countries and Mexico.

Basques began immigrating to Southern California during the Gold Rush years. The first settlers to this area had initially tried to make their fortunes in Argentina but the rumors of instant riches lured these men to try their luck in the gold mines of Northern California. After early disappointments, they were attracted to the South where an abundance of open land allowed them to exploit their innate agricultural abilities in this new country.

They initially settled in the Los Angeles area, where there was still open land and conditions were ideal for raising sheep. The central district where Basque hotels and businesses were located for many years was around Aliso and Alameda Streets. Basques from the outlying areas looked forward to a visit downtown to catch up on the latest news from the old country. These were the sites of numerous weddings, baptisms and other family celebrations. Shepherders used the hotels as their com-

## Southern California Basque Club

munication center receiving their mail and other information there.

Among the early men who ventured to Southern California and established some of these early families were Domingo Amestoy, Gaston Oxart, Miguel Leonis, Domingo Bastanchury, Simon Gless, and Jean Baptiste Batz. In the early years they established their ranches around what we now refer to as the downtown Los Angeles area. As is the norm for the Basque culture, these early Basques began to contact their relatives, friends, and neighbors to follow them to this new mecca.

As the downtown area began to develop, it did not take long for the Basques to find good open land for their sheep in the coastal and inland valleys of Southern California. As these sheep ranches proliferated along with other agricultural endeavors, certain towns began to be associated with large Basque populations. Among these were Artesia, Chino, Fullerton, La Puente, and San Juan Capistrano/El Toro.

Prior to 1946 there were no formal organizations to bring the Basques together to celebrate their culture, but rather individual families would find reasons to put together a "besta" and invite all their friends and family. In Chino and La Puente, "canchas" were built where people would come to watch the handball games and root on their favorite players. By the 1940's Basque hotels were built near the early canchas and these became the centers of Basque cultural activity.

### Establishment of the Club

Father Charles Espelette, the first secretary of the club noted in his minutes (which are all handwritten and contained in a small black ledger book), that the club was organized on August 11, 1946 at the Mount Carmel Church, Mission Grounds in Montebello. "Its aim was to promote the social and cultural side of the various Basque families living in Southern California... so that at specified times they could gather together... enjoy a home-coming atmosphere, take confidence in themselves... and on special occasions represent, as a group the ancient Basque Race".

On this August day a fundraiser organized by Matias Etchart and F. Pete Barcelona, among others, was held at the Mission Grounds to assist the poor of Fr. Espelette's Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Espelette claimed that there was a representative group of 500 who consented to their wishes of forming a Basque club. Apparently, they must have realized that this was an ideal way to ensure the continuance of the culture and language among the young.

The actual organization of the Southern California Basque Club in

## Southern California Basque Club

1946 was primarily due to Father Espelette. He was a Benedictine monk who was assigned as priest to the Mt. Carmel parish but acted a missionary to the Basque families living here. He had a deep conviction to serve the Basque people as well as the parishioners of his parish church in Montebello. It was with both these groups in mind that he began organizing what was originally known as the Southern California Eskualdun Club. His purpose was twofold: to ensure that the Basque culture remained strong and that any benefits gained could assist the poor parishioners of Montebello.

It was with these goals in mind that Espelette began searching for leaders in the Basque community who would be able to assist him with establishing a club. He sought out eight individuals, and on September 18, 1946, at the monastery of Montebello the first meeting of the charter members was held. A second meeting took place at Laurent Arretche's house in Chino where the bylaws were adopted and the club was firmly under way. It was decided that these nine men would serve in their capacities for a period of one year and any new members would need to be voted in by a majority of votes.

### The Charter Members

John Lifur	Los Angeles	President
Matias Etchart	Chino	Vice President
Fr. Charles Espelette	Montebello	Secretary/ Treasurer
J. Baptiste Chilibolost	Chino	Kitchen
Pete Chilibolost	Chino	Kitchen
F. Pete Barcelona	Chino	Dance Leader
Laurent Arretche	Chino	Band Leader
Jean Iriart	La Puente	Propaganda
Mike Pedroarena	Los Angeles	Door/tickets

See Biographies for more information about these individuals.

### 1946 • 1953 Brea

Since fundraising was a primary function of the club, it was decided that they should have an annual picnic. The first picnic took place on June 15, 1947 at the Shell Oil Barbecue Pits in Brea and was held at this site until 1953. It was through Sam Landa who operated a store and bar in Brea that the club was able to secure this site. It was an idyllic location in the hills above Brea that was developed and gener-

## Southern California Basque Club

ally utilized by the owners of Shell Oil for family picnics. This first picnic brought 730 people through the gates which must have surely impressed the nine charter members.

Entry to the picnic was \$.75 and the meal cost \$1.35. The first picnics would hardly be discernible from those held today. The meal at the picnics consisted of barbecue lamb, chilindron, potato salad and green salad. The meat was marinated in the traditional style and barbecued to perfection. The potato salad was different and a rather difficult task for the women of the club due to the large containers necessary. They would gather and prepare it the day prior to the picnic and some years they would even clean out the bathtub in order to mix the ingredients. Sandwiches made of barbecued leg of lamb were served on picnic night.

The original dance group was also organized by Father Espelette who recruited some of the young Basques from El Toro, Chino, and La Puente. The dancers were taught and led by Laurent Arretche and Pete Barcelona until Pete passed away in 1962. Fr. Espelette provided the costumes to each of the dancers. These were not traditional Basque dance costumes but offered uniformity among the dancers. Dance practices were initially held at the monastery in Montebello then later changed to the Chilibolost home in Chino. During the first picnics, Madeleine Lifur Schneiders would also perform some Spanish dances for the crowds.

Music for the dance group was provided by Laurent Arretche on his accordion. The evening entertainment was handled by an orchestra which included Egidio "Jildo" Puppi, an Italian immigrant farmer who learned to play the Basque "jota" in addition to the popular waltzes and polkas of the period. Another member of the orchestra, Noline Errecalde Mocho, played the accordion at the earliest picnics and continued to provide musical accompaniment for the dance group through the 1980's. Joe Asparren from Los Angeles sang the National Anthem at the earliest picnics.

In 1949, Mary Rose Healy, a member of the Uricarriet family was crowned the first Queen of the picnic. Starting with Mary Rose, each year a young girl between the ages of 10 and 15 was chosen to be crowned Queen. The new queen was crowned by the previous year's queen during the entertainment program after having marched in together in front of all the dancers. Each girl had to make a speech in Basque explaining who their families were and what it meant to them to be Basque. The queen would sit on stage and preside over the day's program. This was an annual event until 1980 when Linda Indaburu was crowned the last Southern California Basque Club Queen.

Advertising for the picnic was primarily done by word of mouth as it is done today although in these early years, the club additionally placed

## Southern California Basque Club

ads in the Courrier Francais and the Union Nouvelle. These were weekly French newspapers published in Los Angeles.

Father Espelette noted that Dolores Ordoquy and Sheriff Eugene Biscailuz were in attendance at the 1950 picnic. Both were from early Los Angeles Basque families. Ms. Ordoquy was a singer who, according to the notes, sang for the last time at this picnic. Sheriff Biscailuz, whose father was a prominent lawyer in Los Angeles at the turn of the century, was the sheriff of the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department for many years.

It cannot be underestimated how much work it was for the nine charter members to organize a picnic for 730+ people, therefore, in 1947 the charter members nominated and elected six new members. Ben Amestoy, Ramon Arrossagaray, Joe Changala, John Etcheberria, Sam Landa and Agustin Mujica were asked to join the club. This expanded the membership to fifteen and the following year they decided to expand further. In 1948, Ben Bidart, Michel Mutuberria, Ben Olhasso and Domingo Segura were elected as members. Again in 1953 it was agreed to increase the membership and the new members accepting were Louis Etcheberria, Fred LanFranco, Domingo Mendionde and Joe Ustariz.

The process of nominations and elections of new members has been the tradition since these early days and remains the method of selection. The primary criteria for membership, other than an affiliation with the Basque culture, is the willingness to work and participate at the picnics. Over the course of 50 years the club has had approximately 115 actual members with some currently serving, some serving until their death, and others having participated as long as they desired and then for various personal reasons moved on. The time given and work provided by each member throughout the years has been greatly appreciated.

During the first years the meetings of the members took place at the homes of Laurent and Simona Arretche in Chino, Pete and Marcelina Barcelona in Chino or the Chilibolost ranch in Carbon Canyon. These were strictly business meetings with no formal meals involved. Later the meetings also took place at the homes of Ben and Lucie Bidart, Michel and Marie Mutuberria and Domingo and Marie Segura, all in Chino and became a family gathering and social event.

In addition to the picnics and meetings, the club also sponsored special occasions to promote the Basque culture. In 1951 a reception was held for Father Adrian Gachitegy, a Basque priest from Les Aldudes. He came to research the Basques who had immigrated to the United States. This was eventually published as "Les Basques dans L'Ouest Americain". The reception was held at the Centro Basco in Chino and included handball games between Bakersfield and Chino.

In 1953 the last picnic took place at Shell Oil Park as the facility closed its gates. The members were faced with choosing a new location.

### 1954 • 1985 La Puente

In 1954 it was decided to change the site of the picnic to the La Puente Handball Club, and it remained the center of the club's activities for 31 years. The members also considered using Sallaberria's Centro Basco Hotel in Chino and the Portuguese hall in Artesia.

The La Puente Handball Club had been formed in 1940 after a group of Basques, including Jean Etchebarren and Dominique Sorzabal, attended a wedding at the Portuguese Hall in Artesia and decided that a similar facility was needed in the La Puente area. Although the Basques of the area started it, the club was inclusive of the French, Italian, and Spanish families living there. The handball court itself was initially built indoors but expansion of the facilities later necessitated it moving outdoors. A large grassy area provided an open space where the dance groups would perform and the outdoor picnic tables gave it a country ambiance. The open barbecue pits provided the means to feed a large congregation of people and filled the grounds with the scent of barbecued lamb. It was apparent that the La Puente Handball Club was the ideal setting for future picnics.

The leadership of the club remained the same until the death of Matias Etchart in 1956 and Father Espelette in 1958. The last entry to Fr. Espelette's notebook was the financial statement of the 1958 picnic. The members elected Laurent Arretche as the Vice President and a couple of years later Joe Changala was elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Actually it was his wife, Amalia Itcea Changala who would also attend and transcribe the minutes of each meeting.

During these years the meetings were held at a variety of locations in Southern California including the Centro Basco Hotel in Chino, the Changala Ranch in Irvine, the Chilibolost/Cihigoyenette home in Chino, the Rodriguez dairy in Chino, the La Puente Handball Club, the Chino Fairgrounds, Taylor's Cafe in Chino, and the Basque Cottage in La Puente. These were generally social meetings in which the families participated in a full day of discussion, food, wine, song and music.

In addition to the regular meetings the members began a tradition in 1955 of going to Mt. Baldy or Lytle Creek trout ponds for a fish fry. These facilities had picnic areas which were conducive to a typical Basque barbecue. The men would arrive early in the morning to catch the fish and the remainder of the families would arrive later for an afternoon of trout and lamb in a relaxed atmosphere in the mountains.

As in the early years, most of the cooking responsibilities for the meetings as well as for the picnic were handled by Domingo and Marie Segura. For many years the club paid a small stipend to the Seguras for all their efforts and work, but all will agree that it was truly a labor of love that sustained this couple for the many meals they cooked together. Many of the younger Basques who worked with them were able to learn the fine art of Basque cooking. In 1963 Domingo relinquished his role as head of the kitchen. It was decided that it was too burdening for one member and the various tasks were delegated to more people. The task of cooking for the meeting was designated to groups of three members each which rotated for each meeting. Still today, the task of cooking for each meeting is handled by small groups of members and rotated.

Many changes took place in the committees in 1963. Michel Mutuberria took over the responsibility of the meat, Martin Itcea made the salad, Tony Zualet the beans and the sarza continued to be made by Domingo Segura. The gate was headed by Ben Bidart later with Jean Mocho. John Etcheberria was put in charge of the bar, and advertising was handled by John Lifur. Food servers were coordinated by Marie Mutuberria.

In 1965, at the age of 77, John Lifur decided that 19 years was sufficient as president, and he asked John Etcheberria to take over. Etcheberria was elected as President by the membership, and Ben Bidart Sr. took over as Vice President from Laurent Arretche.

In 1967, in an effort to show more pride in the club by its members, it was decided to begin wearing white shirts with the name of the club embroidered on the back and the members first name on the front. The original patches were sewn by Leona Cihigoyenette and the members still wear shirts in this fashion today.

Father Chalet, the Basque missionary to California in 1968, offered to commence the picnic's activities with a mass. This established the custom of opening the picnic with Mass and has become the traditional at all the Basque picnics throughout the United States. Subsequent missionaries were Fathers Copentipy, Sallabemborde and Cachenaut. 1980 was the last year the Basque priest was able to celebrate mass for this picnic as the traditional date of the picnic was in conflict with Elko's Basque Festival. Since that time a local priest has been asked to celebrate Mass in English while the songs and prayers were continued in the Basque language.

In 1970, John Etcheberria's brother-in-law, Martin Itcea was elected President. That same year Martin recommended that a large coffee pot with a spigot for self service be purchased to relieve Marie Mutuberria of having to serve all the coffee with two small pots. The committees

chiefs continued to change in the 70's: Fred LanFranco took over the Bar, then later handed it over to Dick Ermigarat and later Wes Devol, Joe Changala was in charge of the salad and Martin Itcea began making beans. The sarza was made by Joe Changala and Fred LanFranco. John Borgogno took responsibility of the tickets, and Domingo Mendionde became co-chair of the kitchen and took over full responsibility in 1972. Posters were made up to advertise the picnic and placed at various locations such as the Basque Restaurants where people were likely to see them. The original posters were designed by Marianna Etcheverria. In 1974 the club advertised in Le Californien newspaper for the last time.

The largest attendance was recorded in 1977 for the picnic with 1219 people paying to attend. The prices that year were \$1.00 for entry, and the meals were \$3.50. Domingo Mendionde recommended that lukainka sausage sandwiches be sold instead of the lamb sandwiches which proved to be a popular addition to the picnic menu. The existing officers decided that it was time for some new blood, and that year Ben Bidart Jr. was elected President, Joe Yzurdiaga as Vice President and Henry Aguerre as Secretary/Treasurer.

In 1979, the club became members of the North American Basque Organization (NABO) which was organized to unite and to provide activities for all the Basque clubs in America. One NABO activity is an annual mus tournament from which the winner is sponsored to attend the World Mus championship wherever it is held. Mus is a card game of four to six players paired into two teams that has some of the bluffing characteristics of poker. This prompted the Southern California Basque Club to begin holding its own mus tournament. This has become an annual event and participated by many of its members. The winners from this club then participate in the NABO mus tournament.

In 1979 and 1980 a group of handball players from France were in town and the club sponsored handball games at the La Puente Handball Club in late September. Tito Chanchorena was elected as Vice President in 1980 and John Lifur died that year at the age of 92 having been the last survivor of the original Charter members. In 1983 Henry Aguerre was elected as President and Jean Cihigoyenette replaced him as Secretary/Treasurer.

### Dancers and Entertainment

The dance group has remained a strong attraction and a unifying force in maintaining the cultural awareness of many young Basque children. The early dancers were led by Laurent Arretche and F. Pete Barcelona but in 1963 the direction of the dancers was taken over by

Martin and Jean Louis Cihigoyenette, cousins who came from the Arneguy area like their predecessors. They continued to teach the "dantza jautsiak" from the Arneguy/Valcarlos region with traditional costumes of colorful back ribbons and side panels for the boys and red skirts, white blouses and black vests for the girls. Leona Cihigoyenette with the help of Teresa Chanchorena also put together these back ribbons and side panels.

Paco Senosian started the Gauden Bat Basque Dancers in 1969. The costumes initially remained the same but he expanded the scope of the dances to other regions and dances such as Makil Dantza and Arko Dantza. He choreographed a Gauden Bat fandango which was the trademark dance of the group for many years. The younger dancers continued to be taught by Jean Louis. Practices for both groups took place at the Henry Bachoc and later the Albert Goyenette dairy in Chino.

Tito Chanchorena led the Gauden Bat and maintained the group for a number of years. Those practices were held at Martin and Leona Cihigoyenette's house in Chino and many times the Sunday morning practices were followed by lunch at the Centro Basco Hotel which was also used as an enticement to lure some of the hesitant young males. Marianna Etcheverria, Gracie Goyenette, and Kathie Goyeneche began teaching the younger dancers, and in 1978 Marianna and Kathie assumed responsibility for the Gauden Bat.

Annually, NABO sponsors a convention which is held in conjunction with a hosting club's annual picnic. The second annual convention in 1979 was held in San Francisco and the Gauden Bat dancers were invited to participate. This was the first time that all the dance groups from throughout the United States were asked to perform together. Organizers set up a parade through the streets of San Francisco and dances were performed continually throughout the two days. The club donated \$500 that year to assist the dance group defray some of their expenses. The gathering of dance groups and exchanging dances is still a very popular activity at the NABO conventions.

The dancers were excited about their trip to San Francisco, and new costumes were designed for the group. They wore costumes of blue dresses with white polka dots for the girls and blue work pants, white shirt, red mokanesa and black espartinas for the boys. Their dance repertoire expanded to the La Gabot, Carnival De Lanz, and Benako among others.

The musicians for the dancers in the 60's were Joe and Grace Cauwell and Noeline Mocho. Later a variety of Basques assisted in providing music for the dancers including Bernardette Mendiondo, Denise Duhart, Veronique Tristant, and Rosemarie Iturburua among others. In 1979 Pedro

## Southern California Basque Club

Juan Etchamendy, a former accordion player turned txistulari, joined Noeline Mocho providing a new element of listening pleasure for the crowds.

The Klika, which is a drum and bugle corps that is popular in the French Basque villages was added as part of the entertainment in 1967. It was started by Jean Louis Indart who with Pele Berterretche went down to Tijuana to purchase the horns and gathered together a group of men who had formally played in the Basque country. The Klika has been maintained and continues to play at all Southern California picnics.

One of the primary incentives for the move to La Puente was the handball court. At each picnic local players would battle out the points on this single front wall court in endurance rallies hitting the ball as hard as possible to the back of the court then finding the opportune time to cut a sharp line drive down one of the "falta" lines. Among the local players were Agustin Arteche, Jean 'Baigorry' St. Esteban, the Aphessetche brothers, Peyo, Xavier, Pettan and Jean Pierre, Arnaud Cachenaute, Jean Louis Iturralde, Luis Isusquina, Jose Marie Iturburua, Prudencio Arburua, Fermin Erro, Dominique Reca, Rene Almirantearena, Miguel Leonis, and Mike Bidart. Later players included Johnny Plaa, Jean Michel Indaburu, Joseph Berterretche, Denis Petrissans and Paul Sallaberria.

For many years there were competitions between these local players and others from San Francisco and Bakersfield. One player from San Francisco, Ganich Iriarteborde, age 70, is returning to play a match this weekend with three other longtime players, Agustin Arteche, Xavier Aphessetche and Pettan Aphessetche. These intercity rivalries were extremely popular and in some years the Basque community in Bakersfield would rent a bus to attend the picnic as a group.

The Masters of Ceremonies for the dance performances and handball were Martin Itcea, Fred Guillemet and Mike Bidart. Martin Itcea had handcrafted a peg board that he used to keep score during the handball games and proudly announced each point "Txakia..., Erreferak..., and were going to ...!" Eilene Arretche sang the national anthem for many years.

In 1968 it was decided to have a Soka-Tira (tug of war) match between La Puente and Chino. The pull was done out in the grassy area of the grounds and both sides were ready, although the Puente group was more prepared as they had worn some type of turf grabbing footwear. But the Chino group was not to be outdone easily. They all dug in their heels, and the tracks of their shoes ripping through the grass were evidence afterwards of the strong defensive characteristics of the Basque

## Southern California Basque Club

people.

One special event during a La Puente picnic was in 1960 when Charles Iriart, who was a travel agent in the French Basque country and responsible for handling the immigration of a number of Basques into Southern California, was coordinating a group of singers from the Basque country. They were planning a visit to the United States, and the members agreed to sponsor them to sing at the picnic that year.

This picnic was celebrated for the last time in La Puente in 1984 and the following year moved to the San Bernardino County Junior Fairgrounds in Chino.

### 1985 • 1996 Chino

Since the 1960's Chino had become the major Basque population center in Southern California. Dairies dominated the agricultural industry and the Centro Basco Hotel served as the cultural center for the entire Basque community. Since the majority of attendees, as well as the members actually lived in the Chino area, it was thought that the attendance at the picnics would improve. Therefore, in 1985 the Southern California Basque Club picnic moved to Chino.

The San Bernardino County Junior Fairgrounds also known as the Chino Fairgrounds was also very conducive to picnics. The Chino Basque Club, established in 1968, holds their extremely successful annual picnic there each Labor Day weekend. The Fairgrounds had recently undergone renovation with the building of Brinderson Hall and the grounds were completely refurbished.

The actual schedule of the picnic has not changed. The morning opens up with Mass then a barbecue lunch is served. To give a little variety to the two meals being served, the menu was switched from lamb at both meals, to steak in the afternoon and lamb in the evening. As usual, the Gauden Bat and Dantzari Onestak dancers perform in the afternoon. The evening entertainment is handled by the Dave Miron Orchestra.

One major element of the La Puente picnic which was lost in the move to Chino was the handball games. Initially there was an attempt to find some other competitive activities for the attendees, and a weight carrying contest as well as a "jota" competition were held. Additionally, for a few years the members sponsored handball games the day prior to the picnic which were held at Xavier Aphessetche's "trinketa". This type of handball court is an enclosed court with a roofed room within the court running the entire length of the left wall. This provided an extra dimension making the games among the fastest and most exciting of the

## Southern California Basque Club

pelota courts.

During the Chino years, the work committees have been headed by Louie Etcheberria and Pierre Chamalbide for the meat, Rene Almirantearena and Jean Ascona have made the chilindron, Louie Fernand monitors the bar and Jean Cihigoyenette coordinates the servers. Jean Mocho and Ben Bidart Jr. have been in charge of the gate and Johnny Etcheberria supervises the tickets with Dominic Etcheberria acting as emcee. The meat has been prepared the day prior to the picnic at Tito Chanchorena's house.

The Gauden Bat Dance group continued to be led by a committee. Under the leadership of these individuals and the strong enthusiasm of the dancers, they have expanded their repertoire to include dances from all regions of the Basque country and they have a large costume selection for many of the dances. The group continues to travel to each of the annual NABO conventions to share with other dance groups and have dreams to one day dance in the Basque country.

The musicians for the dance groups are Jeanette Almirantearena and Denise Duhart on the accordion and Martin Almirantearena provides the sound of the txistu. The first dance leader F. Pete Barcelona would surely be proud to see his grandchildren Jeanette, Martin and Joseph Almirantearena continue to be so involved in the music and dancing of the picnics. In addition to their roles in the dance group, they have now formed the group Mendiko Haurak with John Ochandorena, that plays a mixture of the traditional Basque music that we all grew up with as well as modern sounds for the pleasure of all age groups.

The club meetings are currently held at the Fairground's Brinderson Hall where as in the past the meeting is followed by lunch and an afternoon of socializing among the members. In 1990, Dominic Etcheberria was elected President and in 1993 Mitch Gariador became Secretary/Treasurer.

The membership currently stands at 42 and still is very much committed to carrying on the Basque traditions of its founders. It is with pleasure and pride that the membership has been able to sponsor these picnics and other activities which help promote and preserve the Basque culture and traditions. As we celebrate our fifty years of history this weekend, we also look forward to the next fifty as the young children of our community grow and learn what it means to be a Basque and experience the rich traditions of the Basque community.

## So. California Eskualdun Club 139

*organized*  
Was organized... Aug. 11, 1946... at the Mount Carmel Church Mission Grounds, under the auspices of its pastor - (Rev) Fr. Charles Espelette, O.S.B. - a Basque priest

*aim*  
Its aim was to promote the social and cultural side of the various Basque families living in So. California... so that at specified times they could gather together... enjoy a home coming atmosphere take confidence in themselves... and on special occasions represent as a group the ancient Basque race.

*charter members*  
As a representative committee was needed to fulfil this end... a vote was taken among those present (500) as to their wishes in the matter....

*choice of*  
The majority of the votes favored  
John Lizar, Alhaurida, as president  
Mat Etchart, Ontario, as vice-president  
Lament Arretche, Chino,  
Pedroarana, Los Angeles  
John Briant, Puente } received votes in this order.

*1st meeting*  
1st meeting of the Charter members took place at the monastery of Montebello one Sunday - September - 1946.  
*Present*  
President: John Lizar - Mat Etchart Vice-president: Lament Arretche John Briant  
Mike Pedroarana - Fr. Charles Espelette - new members invited: Pete Barcelona, Pete Chiriboga, & Pastor Chiriboga

The original Charter of the Southern California Eskualdun Club  
handwritten by Fr. Espelette.