



CULTURALLY SPEAKING

The monthly newsletter of the Earth Cultures Project of Educational Communications

January 2011

MESSAGE FROM NANCY PEARLMAN



Around the world dance is a part of every culture. In April of 2010, I was lucky enough to experience traditional West African dancing in the country of Burkina Faso. As the third poorest country in the world, I was struck by how friendly and happy the people were. It seemed that regardless of the occasion, the Burkinese would smile, laugh, and dance. My trip had been organized to shoot a television documentary about the need for water wells. Most village women walk one to six miles a day carrying water on their heads. Even where villages had water, most was not clean or sanitary. We were documenting the efforts of American volunteers who were building wells in villages. While the villagers actually dug the wells by hand in hard dirt (the area is in the Sahel just south of the Sahara desert, ten hours from Timbuktu, Mali), the Americans would provide the concrete and other supplies needed to finish the wells so that they wouldn't collapse in the rainy season. We visited many villages in our ten days traveling over 2400 miles. Every time we stopped, the village men, women, and children, would come out to greet us by singing and dancing. They insisted that we eat and join in festivities that lasted for hours. At one village a funeral was going on for the chief's mother. Again, they were all singing and dancing and insisted that we join in the line of mourners dancing in her honor. Some of the volunteers were missionaries who invited us to their church on Sunday. The service was conducted in French and translated into the local language but, as is the case everywhere, the music and dancing needed no translation. Not only did the congregants sing and move in their seats but half of them would get up and dance around the aisles. I joined in to see

what they were doing and there were at least five distinct patterns and steps. My camera people thought they were just going about doing the same thing but the leader, as is often the case in line dancing, was changing the steps and patterns. Contact us if you want to see the video or travel there yourself to volunteer.

*Nancy Pearlman, Executive Director
Educational Communications*

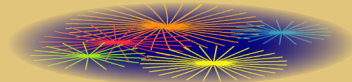
OPA!



Have you ever been in a Greek restaurant and seen the waiters entertain the customers by dancing? They will often do a dance with a shoulder hold called Vary Hasapiko. This means the Heavy Butchers Dance (the dance is heavy, not the butchers!) It's only about 100 years old. It's one of my favorite dances. The Hasapiko type of dance derives from a fast wild military sword dance that was supposed to have been copied by the butchers, probably because they had big knives! Eventually the dance became formalized with a basic pattern related to the Hora, making it a more social dance called either Hasaposerviko or Grigoro Hasapiko (Serbian or fast Hasapiko) It gradually toned down and developed other step patterns to become the heavy hasapiko.

*contributed by
Preston Ashbourne*

NEW YEARS IN LIMA



Celebrating New Years in Lima was an unforgettable experience. My mother would boil a big pot of hot chocolate for us and all the neighboring kids who wanted to stop by. We would eat Paneton (Cake filled with dry fruits). Later we would go and give our share of fireworks to place on a human-sized rag doll made by the neighbors which bore the face of the most unpopular political figures of Peru. Five minutes before midnight we would be drinking hot chocolate and watching the doll burn and shoot off all different sorts of fireworks into the sky. Walking around different neighborhoods, one could see the amount of work and artistry placed on these human-sized dolls that resembled so much the actual people. Peru has been known for their high quality artisans. In the city of Cusco one can buy Incan art from golden artifacts, stone figures, and clay vases, all with a great deal of detail.

*contributed by
Milton Guerrero*



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CAN'T STOP DANCING!



LINKS OF INTEREST

MUSEUMS

Bowers Museum

<http://www.bowers.org>

Craft & Folk Art Museum

<http://www.cafam.org>

Metropolitan Museum of Art

(search the database for works of art, costumes & more)

http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/

Museum of Latin American Art

<http://www.molaa.org>

Pacific Asia Museum

<http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org>

ONGOING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA

Current Cultural Happenings
Around Los Angeles

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/caltechfolkdance>

Olvera Street in Los Angeles

<http://olvera-street.com>

Folkworks Magazine

<http://www.folkworks.org/>

FOLK DANCE & FOLK MUSIC INFORMATION

Dick Oakes' Folk Dance Pages

<http://www.phantomranch.net/folkdanc/folkdanc.htm>

Folkways (ethnic music)

<http://www.folkways.si.edu/index.aspx>

ARTS AND CULTURES

Smithsonian Magazine

Arts & Cultures

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture>

Smithsonian Center for Folklife
and Cultural Heritage

<http://www.folklife.si.edu/>

ABOUT THE EARTH CULTURES PROJECT

Earth Cultures is one of the projects of Educational Communications, a non-profit 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization founded in 1958, dedicated to improving the quality of life on this planet. The organization produces documentaries and works with several performing groups and individuals through its Earth Cultures Project to promote cultural awareness and provide education through the arts.

Support the Arts & Education!

VOLUNTEER AND DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are always needed in the office to help with phone calls and other tasks. If you are interested in volunteering please call Nancy at (310) 559-9160.

Visit the Earth Cultures Project website to find easy ways to donate to any of our projects. Use "goodsearch" to search the web as you always do, and a small percentage goes to the non-profit of your choice. Sign up for "eScrip" or "GoodShop." Spend as you would anyway and donate to your cause at the same time. We hope you'll choose Educational Communications in Los Angeles as your non-profit of choice.

Your donation will help bring the arts back to education under the Earth Cultures Project, or help fund other projects of Educational Communications.

EARTH CULTURES PROJECT

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