

BOO!

It's terror time!
PAGE C8



TRAILING OF THE SHEEP

Basque shepherd brings annual festival to life



CAROL WALLER

By HAYDEN SEDER
For the Idaho Press

The award-winning annual Trailing of the Sheep event is coming to Ketchum for its 23rd year October 9 to 13. It is a five-day festival including activities such as classes and workshops, dancing, story telling and the big sheep parade of 1,500 sheep going down Main Street, and honors the 150-year-plus tradition of moving sheep — “trailing” them — from high mountain summer pastures down through the valley to traditional winter grazing and lambing areas in the south.

No one appreciates the significance of this event more than Alberto Uranga, the last of the Basque sheep worker in Sun Valley.

Uranga came to this country in 1968 and worked as a shepherd for three years in the Blaine County area. The now 73 year old has been a boardmember of the Trailing of the Sheep for 17 years and is the founder of Lasaii Benefits, a creative financing company that helps clients purchase real estate that they can occupy using IRA funds.

FROM BASQUE COUNTRY TO SHEPHERDING COUNTRY

Uranga grew up in the Basque region of northern Spain in the fishing village of Mutriku. The son of a fisherman and a homemaker, Uranga had no experience with farms, sheep, or shepherding in general when he decided to emigrate to the United States.

“It was pretty hard because I was not born on a farm,” Uranga said. “I had no clue. I came to the United States as an adventurer.”

Uranga had a job with an Italian company back home that included a good salary, commission, and even a Mercedes Benz to drive. But he realized he wanted to see the world and signed up to come to the U.S. in the only way he could find available: shepherding. At the time, the Western Association would bring people to the United States with the contingency that they must work on a ranch for at least three years before a green card would be given. Despite his lack of experience, Uranga took the opportunity and worked for the Faulkner Land and Livestock Company out of Gooding for three years.

THE HARD LIFE OF A SHEPHERD

Those three years would prove hard on Uranga as they are on most shepherders due to the loneliness as well as run ins with bears, rowdy miners and pistol-toting cowboys.

“Today, shepherders have a lot easier job because of technology and the things we didn’t have 50



COURTESY OF ALBERTO URANGO

ABOVE: Alberto Uranga at age 23 working as a shepherd. **TOP:** The annual Trailing of the Sheep festival is Oct. 9 — 13 in Ketchum.

years ago,” Uranga said. “I learned what loneliness was all about back then.”

Uranga spent his three years working as a camp tender with a fellow shepherd, putting up the camp, cooking, taking care of the horses and taking over watching the sheep for the two or three hours when the shepherd would take a break and maybe catch a siesta. Having a partner in the mountains made the loneliness slightly more bearable but the schedule of shepherding kept the two apart most of the day, a relationship that Uranga compares to a husband and wife who don’t see each other until they go to bed each night. And in such an intimate working environment, getting paired with the wrong person can make the experience unbearable.

The shepherding season would start in late March when Uranga and his shepherd would take a mule-driven sheepwagon (today they are pulled by pickup trucks) from Gooding to Fairfield to Big Smoky to Baker Creek to Big Smoky Meadows to Soldier Mountain to Hill City to Bliss and back to Gooding where Uranga would enjoy the perks of city living like dancing and drinking from December to mid March. In June of each year, the wagon was traded in for a tent as the men and their sheep moved into the high mountains.

Uranga spent most of his free time learning English from a book he had as well as the occasional newspaper he found on the side of the road. Any chance to listen to the radio was welcomed as well.

While there are numerous lives and memories of this time — including three different encounters with bears — one illustrates the lifestyle succinctly.

“It was August 17, 1968, my 23rd birthday,” Uranga said. “We were at Little Smoky and the sheep-



HAYDEN SEDER

Alberto Uranga today.

herder got very sick and had to go to town to see a doctor. I didn’t know anything about sheep and didn’t know what to do. He said, ‘It’s a beautiful day, the sheep aren’t going anywhere.’ He said he’d come back as soon as he could. Within an hour, the weather turned nasty to snow and wind and the sheep took off and I couldn’t stop them. The three sheepdogs and I went inside the tent and I kept saying to myself, ‘What have you done?’ and I cried myself to sleep. I woke up and heard the sounds of sheep and they had come back. It turned out during the storm the sheep just went to the other side of the hill to cover themselves.”

Today, Ketchum continues to celebrate its shepherding past with a celebration of Basque culture and annual Trailing of the Sheep Festival.

“Ketchum was one of the largest sheep gathering operations in the world,” Uranga said. “In part, Ketchum is today what it is because the sheep industry did not leave when the mining industry did.”

More SHEEP | C8

Is flying really faster than driving?

Editor’s Note: This is the first of two columns from Tim’s summer travels. The second will run two weeks from today.

HOODSPORT, Wash. — The road to Hoodspport, Wash. is so familiar my car could almost drive there without me. I’ve driven it over a hundred times.

Hoodspport is the closest town to the Woodward family getaway, a cabin on a finger of Puget Sound. When my wife’s folks were alive, we’d go there to swim, fish and otherwise enjoy ourselves. With their passing, the cabin passed to my wife. Now we go there to weed, paint, replace the deck, replace the flooring . . . We liked it better when we could lie around like slugs, but there you are.



TIM WOODWARD

For the Idaho Press

This summer, we decided to fly there instead of driving. It’s a beautiful drive through the Blue Mountains and the Columbia Gorge, but it takes all day. We had a lot of hard work ahead of us, so we figured we’d treat ourselves and save time by flying.

“Maybe we’ll fly over Jenny,” our son joked as the plane taxied to the runway.

A reference to our younger daughter, who was driving home from the cabin with her family the same day.

“It’s going to be a rough departure,” our pilot announced. “Be sure to buckle yourselves and any children in tightly. Make sure all loose items are securely stowed so they don’t fly around. Flight attendants, remain seated. There’ll be no beverage service. We’ll be lucky to escape with our lives.”

He didn’t really say that last sentence; I made it up. But you get the idea. We were in for a rough trip.

In more ways than one. Hoodspport isn’t on the beaten path. Getting there by air involves taking a train from the Seattle-Tacoma airport to downtown Seattle, a ferry from Seattle to Bremerton, Wash., and a “foot ferry” (passengers only, no cars) to relatives’ home in Port Orchard, Wash., where our older daughter had left her car a few weeks earlier. From there, it’s an hour’s drive to the cabin.

The walk from the train station in downtown Seattle to the ferry dock is normally a pleasant one. Without luggage to haul, it’s an easy 15 minutes or so. We had enough luggage for a soccer team.

Did I mention the dog? Our daughter’s dog had made the trip in the plane’s cargo hold. In addition to multiple suitcases, backpacks and assorted bags and packages, we were pulling a dog crate the size of an air conditioner. The only one not working like a dog schlepping baggage was the dog itself.

Huffing, puffing, sweating like pigs, we arrived at the ferry terminal in the nick of time to catch the ferry. We would have caught the ferry, that is, if the Boarding Nazi hadn’t stretched a rope in front of us just as we were getting in line to board.

“Sorry, line’s closed,” he said, clearly enjoying the moment.

“But the ferry hasn’t left yet! And you just put the rope up two seconds ago.”

“Sorry.”

We considered throwing him off the dock, but settled for cursing him and his ancestors while waiting an hour and a half for the next ferry.

The next ferry was 20 minutes late. It’s supposed to connect with the foot ferry, but being late it pulled into the dock as the foot ferry was pulling out. We’d missed two ferries by a total of less than a minute and were looking at yet another wait.

That said, the second wait wasn’t without entertainment. One of the couples waiting for the foot ferry had to have been the friendliest people in Washington.

“Hi!” they said in unison. “Are you having a nice day?”

“Now that you mention it, no. Almost everything has gone wrong, and . . .”

“Great! Glad to hear it. We’re having a wonderful day, too!”

With this they were off to accost other passengers.

“Hi! Are you having a good day?”

“Well . . .”

“Great! We sure are!”

Then, back to us again, “Have you met Mister?”

“Uh . . . no. Who’s Mister?”

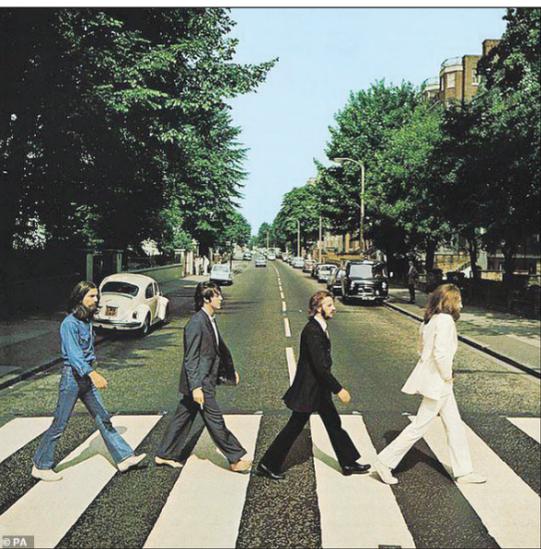
This struck them as inordinately funny.

“Can you believe it?” the man asked his girlfriend. “They don’t know who Mister is. This is Mister!”

With this he produced a plastic skeleton with glowing eyes.

More FLYING | C8

RECORD EXCHANGE TOP 10



1. "Abbey Road 50th Anniversary," The Beatles
2. "Sound and Fury," Sturgill Simpson
3. "Welcome Home," Hellyeah
4. "Rough Start," Johnny Boy Kunk
5. "Blue World," John Coltrane
6. "Jaime," Brittany Howard
7. "In Spite of Ourselves," John Prine
8. "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?," Billie Eilish
9. "Igor," Tyler, the Creator
10. "In Cauda Venenum," Opeth

BOISE WEEKLY SNEAK PEEK



Boise Weekly is an Idaho Press sister publication, out on newsstands on Wednesdays and printed with Idaho Press on Thursdays.

Here's one of the stories coming up in the next Boise Weekly.

GROWING OLD, GETTING OUT

Cycling Without Age is a Denmark-based nonprofit that sends seniors on outdoor excursions. It has a chapter in Meridian, and Boise Weekly was on hand to bike around Julius Kleiner Park with the group.

Flying /from C1

"We bought Mister in Seattle today. Isn't he amazing?"

While he regaled us with Mister, his girlfriend danced off to annoy other passengers. It was at this point that we decided they weren't merely friendly; they were stoned out of their minds.

"Let's get a picture of Mister with your dog!" He helped Mister straddle the dog for a cell phone photo, which reduced them both to peals of shrieking laughter. Luckily, the foot ferry was pulling into the dock, sparing us further examples of their finely-honed wit. It was a good thing, because we weren't in a laughing mood. It had been a long, frustrating day. We were weary, grumpy, snapping at each other.

Murphy's Law, however, wasn't finished with us yet. When we arrived at our relatives' house to get the car ...

Its battery was dead. Here we'll draw the closing curtain over our trip to the family cabin, except to say that by the time we arrived there it was well after dark.

Our other daughter — who had left the cabin to drive back to Boise at about the same time our flight left Boise for Seattle — had been home for hours.

Next: An unforgettable character — Harley Bob McFarland.

Tim Woodward's column appears every other Sunday and is posted on woodwardblog.com the following Mondays. Contact him at woodwardcolumn@hotmail.com.

TAKE A TRIP TO TERROR

By JEANNE HUFF
jhuff@idahopress.com

Bwa-ha-ha! Yeah, it's that time of the year ... can't you hear the buzz of chainsaws and feel the pounding of your heart as you struggle to catch your breath? No worries, you'll be screaming your head off in no time if you dare to take a stroll through Haunted World or the Field of Screams, or poke your head into the Requiem Haunted House.

And this year, there's a new scare in town — the Haunted Halls of Atlantis Labs, presented by the 2417 Experience in Boise. It's a maze of crazy rooms, each one created by a different artist. And not only that, each room has a story that is a part of the overall story, so in addition to jump-scars and visual terrors, there is a narrative that ties it all together.

It seems Atlantis Labs was a government-free scientific laboratory from the 1970s — so, no regulations. They discovered the secret of "pocket dimensions." We can walk through the halls because the labs were "frozen in time" to prevent some sort of cataclysmic explosion.

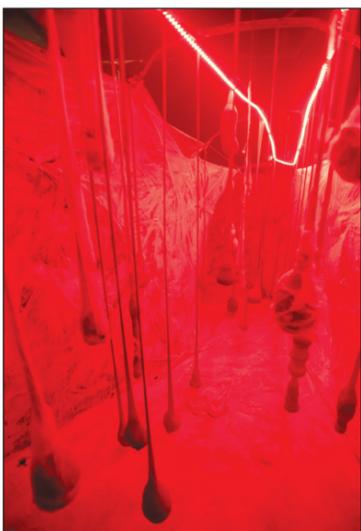
The result is a dizzying conglomeration of an experience, that goes from creepy to spooky to terrifying on the scare-o-meter.

"It's an immersion installation," said co-owner Scott Schmader, who said the intent is less of a look-see and more of "a multimedia experience design."

"I like to say it's less gallery and more of a walk-through, park-ride theme. You're being a part of a story, and you can touch and feel and hear and smell. ... We tried to put our own unique spin on it," Schmader said.

There are different experiences you can choose, too, as you walk through the "portals to other dimensions," where "something nefarious happened," Schmader said. One is a "cryptologist experience," another is more about a historical take on things.

As you cautiously creep through



JAKE KING/IDAHO PRESS

Hey, "Stranger Things" fans — does this look familiar? Atlantis Labs in Boise contains a series of rooms that tell an intertwined narrative about the building. The escape room/art installation hybrid has upped its scary factor for the October Halloween season.

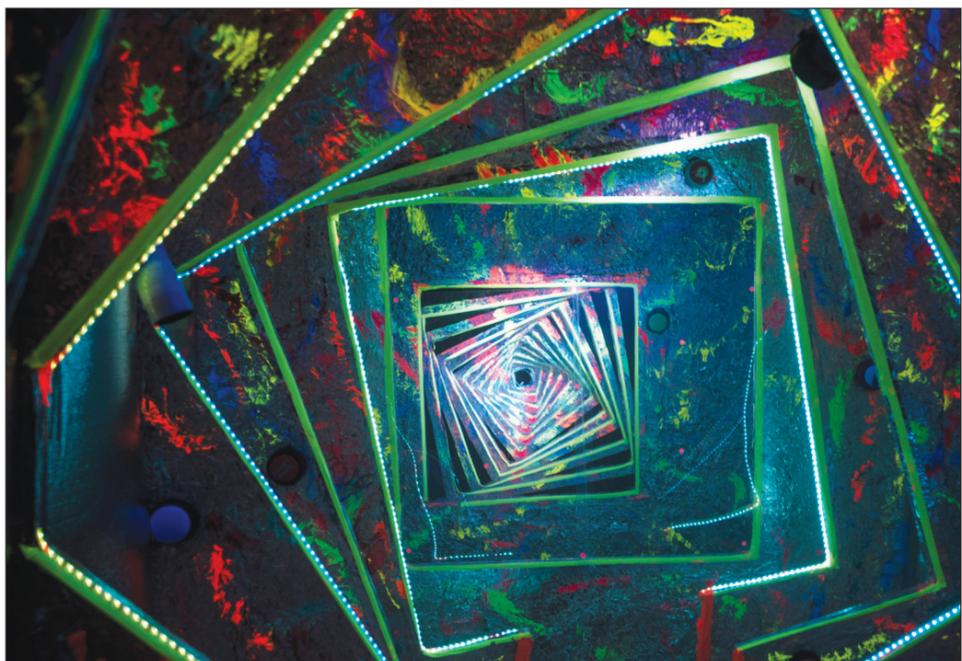
the halls wearing hardhat and vest, you will encounter the Infinity Room, the Gorilla Room and the Creepy Doll Room, among others. Oh, and a creepy clown may or may not be roaming about.

And if you're a fan of "Stranger Things," one room may give you the real heebie-jeebies, because there is definitely a vibe of "The Upside-Down" in there.

The Haunted Halls of Atlantis Labs, at 2417 Bank Drive in Boise, will be open on Fridays and Saturdays until and including Halloween. There are two levels of spooky you can choose from. If you go from 6 to 8 p.m., it is more family-fun oriented as a "spooky Halloween" experience and costs \$15.

From 8 to 11:30 p.m., expect the scares to ramp up as Atlantis Labs specters of the night come alive, and the price of admission jumps to \$25.

Jeanne Huff is the community engagement editor for the Idaho Press. You can reach her at 208-465-8106 and follow her on Twitter @goodnewsgirl.



JAKE KING/IDAHO PRESS

The Infinity Room at Atlantis Labs.

Boo! Other local haunts

What: Haunted World, "20 years of scarrorizing Idaho!"

Where: 20031 Northside Blvd. in Caldwell

When: Open daily through Halloween; Weekdays: dusk to 10 p.m.; Weekends: dusk to midnight

Tickets: \$25. For parties of 25 or more, tickets are discounted \$2 each; for parties of more than 50, contact Haunted World for a bigger discount: hauntedworld.org.

About: This is a 35-acre outdoor haunt that takes about 45 minutes to peruse as you go through Gristle's cornfield, a dungeon of torture and a number of other features, including Leon's 55-foot Slide into Darkness and Hannibal Lecter's Carnival of Pigs. Other attractions include a haunted hotel asylum and a 15-acre corn maze.

Tickets sold as late as 10 p.m. weekdays and midnight on weekends. Tickets can be purchased at the gate or online; there is a \$1 fee for payment with credit card. You can get to the front of the line with "Fast Track," which is an additional \$5. Kids 5 and under get in for free.

LOCAL HAUNTS

What: Requiem Haunted House, "Welcome to your worst nightmare"

Where: 810 Main St. in Caldwell

When: This place is open most Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through Halloween (plus Wednesday Oct. 30). Weekdays: 7:30 to 10 p.m.; Weekends: 7:30 to midnight. Friday Oct. 12 is Caldwell Firefighters Night — \$1 per ticket goes to the Caldwell Fire Department's Fire Stair Climb.

Tickets: \$17 for over 13 and \$12 for 12 and under. Extras include: fast pass \$4, coffin ride \$5 and printed photo \$6.

About: Billed as "the largest indoor haunted attraction in the Treasure Valley," with 13,000 square feet of "pure indoor terror" inside a century-old building.

What: Field of Screams at The Farmstead

Where: 2500 S. Eagle Road in Kuna

When: Open from dark until 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights in October.

Tickets: \$20.75

About: The one price gets you in for all the fun at The Farmstead — "Idaho's original corn maze," this year featuring "The Hungry, Hungry Caterpillar," the pumpkin patch — plus the Field of Screams where "the land is haunted by the secrets of generations gone by."

Sheep /from C1

Shepherding continues in the Ketchum area today although it is now Peruvians, not Basques, that make up the majority of sheepherders. Uranga recently went to visit with some of the modern

day sheepherders and asked one of them what shepherding was like today. The shepherd responded, "Very tough," and Uranga thought to himself, "You don't know what tough is."

For more information on the Trailing of the Sheep festival visit trailingofthesheep.org.



CAROL WALLER PHOTOS

ABOVE: A dog herding sheep while a sheep handler watches at the annual Trailing of the Sheep Festival. RIGHT: A Polish Highlander plays his bagpipe for the sheep during the annual Trailing of the Sheep Festival.

