



LA ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE NUEVA IBERIA

(LAENI, INC.) IS A NON-PROFIT, TAX EXEMPT* VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION INCORPORATED IN THE CITY OF NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA IN 2012. LAENI SERVES AS A VEHICLE FOR THE RECOGNITION AND PROMOTION OF THE SPANISH ANCESTRY AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN NEW IBERIA AND THROUGHOUT LOUISIANA. LAENI, INC. ENCOURAGES, SUPPORTS AND DIRECTS PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES INVOLVING EDUCATIONAL, CULINARY, MUSIC, AND ART EXCHANGES WHILE CREATING AN AWARENESS AND DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR LOCAL SPANISH HERITAGE AND CULTURE.

WWW.NEWIBERIASPANHISHFESTIVAL.COM

Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hola Amigos,

I hope this message finds you and your family well and hope you all are enjoying the beauty of the spring season. As I reflect on our recent festival season, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support and participation. Thanks to your dedication, our 11th Annual El Festival Español de Nueva Iberia was a tremendous success—our most profitable three-day festival to date, even with the added challenge of scheduling around the Easter holiday.

However, I must also acknowledge the unfortunate incident that occurred during this year's event. While we are saddened by the outcome, I want to assure our members that we are taking this matter seriously. We are currently reviewing our safety protocols and will be implementing enhanced security measures to ensure that our future festivals remain safe, welcoming, and enjoyable for all.

Looking ahead, we're excited about the many projects and events happening this quarter! We're gearing up for our **Feliz Navidad Fundraiser Pageant**, and we've officially launched the **2026 Festival Poster Contest**. In addition, our **Annual Membership Meeting** is coming soon—an important opportunity for community members to join our mission and get involved in our vibrant organization. If you know someone who would be interested in participating, please spread the word!

Our Board of Directors has also begun preparations for our 12th Annual Festival, scheduled for **April 17–19, 2026**, at Bouigny Plaza in downtown New Iberia. This upcoming festival will be especially meaningful as we commemorate the **250th Anniversary of the American Revolution**, with a theme that honors Spain's crucial role in America's fight for freedom. We're proud to announce our 2026 festival theme: **"Spain on the Bayou: Strengthening America's Fight for Freedom."** We look forward to celebrating the enduring cultural and diplomatic ties between Spain and the United States with all of you. Thank you for being a part of our journey and for helping us preserve and promote our Spanish heritage.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Membership Meeting | June 17, 2025

6pm -8pm | Sliman Theatre, 129 E. Main St. New Iberia

Miss & Master Feliz Navidad Pageant | July 19, 2025

10am - 2pm | Sliman Theatre, 129 E. Main St. New Iberia

Remembering Francisco Bouigny | Labor Day- Sept. 1, 2025

Pie Bar at Cane River Pecan/Bouigny Plaza/Sliman Theatre

LAENI Projects

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

TUESDAY | 06.17.25 | 6PM

SLIMAN THEATRE

129 E. MAIN STREET, NEW IBERIA, LA 70560

JOIN THE TEAM AND BECOME A MEMBER!

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES FIRST ACCESS/
PRE-SALE PERKS FOR EVENTS, FESTIVAL MERCHANDISE,
AND MEMBERS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

• ACTIVE MEMBER

An active member is someone who participates regularly in the activities, events, or meetings of the organization. They may be involved in decision-making, leadership roles, or contributing time and effort to the group's objectives.

• SUPPORTING MEMBER

A supporting member may not be as actively involved in the day-to-day activities but still contributes to the organization in a meaningful way.

LA ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE NUEVA IBERIA, a non-profit volunteer organization incorporated in the City of New Iberia, Louisiana to serve as a vehicle for the recognition and promotion of the Spanish ancestry and culture in New Iberia and throughout Louisiana.

LAENI, Inc. encourages, supports, and directs programs and activities involving educational, culinary, music, and art exchanges while creating awareness and deeper understanding of our local Spanish heritage.

JOIN NOW



WWW.NEWIBERIASPANHSEFESTIVAL.COM



YOU'RE INVITED: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend! Our upcoming Membership Meeting is more than just a gathering—it's an opportunity to become part of something meaningful and impactful within our community.

Whether you're a long-time supporter or newly interested in what we do, this meeting is the perfect chance to learn more about our mission and discover how you can get involved. Attendees will have the opportunity to:

- Meet our Board of Directors
- Hear from our Committee Chairs
- Learn about upcoming events and initiatives
- Explore membership options – become an Active Member or a Supporting Member, whichever fits your availability and interest!

We are always looking for passionate individuals who want to make a difference and help celebrate and preserve our rich Spanish heritage. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining our efforts, we encourage you to attend—and please help us spread the word!

ANNOUNCING OUR FIRST IN-PERSON FELIZ NAVIDAD PAGEANT

Presented by La Asociación Española de Nueva Iberia

We are thrilled to invite you to our very first IN-PERSON Feliz Navidad Pageant—a festive "*Christmas in July*" celebration and fundraiser for our Pageant Scholarship and activities!

This family-friendly event is open to all ages, with NO contracts and NO obligations—just pure fun for a great cause!

Register Today!

Scan the QR code on the flyer to complete your registration and join the fun! Let's make spirits bright this July and support the future of our pageant program. Deadline to enter pageant is July 14, 2025.

Ages are as of July 19, 2025

Baby Miss & Mr. 0-11 months, Toddler Miss 12-23 months
Toddler King 1-3, Tiny Miss 2-3, Little Miss 4-5, Little King 4-6
Junior King 7-10, Petite Miss 6-8, Deb Miss 9-11
Junior 12-14, Teen 15-17, Miss 18-23, Ms. 24-up, married or single

SAVE THE DATE

FELIZ NAVIDAD
Miss & Master

SATURDAY, JULY 19, 2025 | 10 AM
SLIMAN THEATRE - 129 E. MAIN ST, NEW IBERIA, LA 70560

Christmas in July Fundraiser Pageant

(10) GIRL DIVISIONS, 0-UP
(4) BOY DIVISIONS, 0-7

ENTRY FEE \$40

Winners will receive an
Elegant Christmas Crown,
Monogrammed Christmas Banner,
& a Spanish Festival Pin

SCAN HERE
PAGEANT FORMS

FEATURED FAMILY

Written By: Lynette Gosnell

Lopez

I learned of my Spanish ancestry doing research as a young teenager interested in genealogy. I really did not go very far with it as I was researching the Nicholsons. I simply recognized that the names were Spanish. When I asked my paternal grandmother about it. She responded as most people did at that time. "We're Cajun French. We speak French" I challenged her on this (mistake on my part.) I pointed out that she was a Lopez and her mother was a Romero and even if I spoke Russian that wouldn't mean I was Russian. To her credit a few days later, she said to me that yes she was Spanish. "but added, "we speak French".

Getting certification in English as a Second Language brought to my attention that people usually wanted to be accepted with the traits of the majority of people in their location. I hope this was her reason for being so adamant about her heritage.

I am the fifth generation of Gabriel Lopez and I have documentation for 10 generations, including myself and Gabriel's parents in Spain undocumented. This information was provided to me by Larry Gary's sister after a visit to Spain.

Currently I'm researching Gabriel before he came with the settlers to New Iberia. He does not have a "signed contract" in Maurine Bergerie's book *THEY TASTED BAYOU WATER*.

He is listed as a Licensed Grenadier and he received supplies as listed in Bouligny's accounting. Recently I found a Gabriel Lopez listed in the index of LOUISIANA FIXED REGIMENT 1765-1799 that John Hickey is compiling. This adds to my belief that he was here serving in the Spanish Army under Galvez and Bouligny. He accompanied the settlers; fought at Bayou Manchac and returned to settle in New Iberia. His participation is recorded in the research list that was used to have him recognized as a patriot with the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution. I will continue to search for documentation for his early life in Spanish America.

I have wanted to research the other Lopez listed as Juan Lopez, husband of Maria Ruiz. This individual has a family and signed the contract with the Spanish government. People have suggested the two men were brothers... a goal for me.

Of course the thing I enjoy about the festival is the genealogy section. Our first years were the most exciting because we learned so much from one another. We have several times discussed forming a group that would focus on our Spanish ancestry. But after the festival that seems to be a "pipe dream".

**"I HAVE
DOCUMENTATION
FOR 10
GENERATIONS
INCLUDING MYSELF
AND GABRIEL'S
PARENTS IN SPAIN,
UNDOCUMENTED."**



CHILD: LYNETTE NICHOLSON; JULIE ALTHA ROMERO LOPEZ; (SEATED) STANDING: LLOYD ANTHONY, SR; EUNICE LOPEZ NICHOLSON, EUGENA EDOUARD LOPEZ
DESCENDANTS OF FOUNDER JEAN GABRIEL LOPEZ
FIVE GENERATIONS OF A FAMILY - This photo was taken in 1941. It appeared in several newspapers.



—
“IN OUR FAMILY,
CULTURE IS
MORE THAN
TRADITION—IT’S
A LEGACY OF
LOVE
PASSED DOWN
THROUGH
GENERATIONS.”
—

MEET THE BOARD

Written By: Brinkley Lopez

My name is Brinkley Lopez, and I’m from New Iberia, along with my husband, Matt Lopez. We’ve been married for 12 wonderful years and are proud parents to our 7-year-old daughter, Malia, and our dog, Maximus. Matt has worked as a Physical Therapist at Iberia Sports & Rehabilitation for the past 13 years, while I’ve been with Statewide Electrical Services, a family-operated business, for 12 years.

Tell us a Little about Yourself:

In our spare time, Matt enjoys staying active through weightlifting, running, and participating in obstacle course races and marathons. I share a passion for fitness as well, teaching a variety of classes throughout New Iberia, including Pilates, Yoga, BodySculpting, and STEP. In addition to fitness, I’m also a home baker and the owner of BC Cake Boutique, where I specialize in custom cakes, cheesecakes, cupcakes, and more.

How many Years Have you Been on the Board:

All thanks to my late grandfather Charlie Segura who invited us to attend the inaugural Spanish Festival in 2012, our involvement deepened in 2014 when I came up with the idea of launching a Spanish Festival Pageant. That vision became a reality in 2015 when we officially introduced the pageant to the festival. Since then, I’ve had the honor of serving on the board for 10 years, holding various roles including Secretary, Vice President, and currently, President— a position I’ve proudly held for the past 4 festival seasons. In 2023, Matt officially joined the Spanish Festival Board of Directors and was honored to serve as our Spanish Festival King VII in 2023-2024.

What do You Enjoy Most About the Festival:

In our family, culture is more than tradition, it’s a legacy of love passed down through generations. That’s why the Spanish Festival holds such a special place in our hearts. It’s not just about celebrating our heritage, but about educating our community and ensuring that the rich Spanish ancestry of New Iberia is honored, preserved, and passed on to future generations.

Brinkley & Matt
LOPEZ

LAENI Contest

CALL FOR ARTISTS 2026 NEW IBERIA SPANISH FESTIVAL POSTER CONTEST

Artists 14 and older are invited to submit original artwork for the 2026 New Iberia Spanish Festival Poster Contest!

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

- Artwork must highlight the New Iberia Spanish Festival.
- **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**
 - The text "New Iberia Spanish Festival" or "El Festival Español de Nueva Iberia"
 - All seven founding families:
Gary, Lopez, Miguez(z), Prados, Romero, Segura, Viator
- **OPTIONAL THEME: "SPAIN ON THE BAYOU: AMERICA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM"—**
HONORING SPAIN'S ROLE IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.
- All entries must be vertical and able to be digitized to 16"x20".
- Acceptable media: Any, including digital.



DESIGN THE NEXT SPANISH FESTIVAL POSTER

OPEN TO AGES 14 & UP

THE NEW IBERIA SPANISH FESTIVAL NEEDS YOUR HELP IN CREATING BEAUTIFUL PIECES OF ART TO BE FEATURED AS OUR 2026 FESTIVAL POSTER. OUR FESTIVAL WILL BE HELD **APRIL 17TH-19TH, 2026**. OUR CHOSEN THEME WILL BE HONORING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION:

"SPAIN ON THE BAYOU: AMERICA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM."

ARTISTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM OUR THEME.

MAY 15- AUGUST 3, 2025 | ART DROP OFF: MCGEE SCOTT REALTY

PRIZES FOR WINNERS!

FIRST PLACE	SECOND PLACE	THIRD PLACE
• \$500 Cash • Design Featured as our 2026 Poster • Free Admission for artist and guest to King's Ball and Poster Unveiling	• Custom Plaque • Free Yearly LAENI Membership • Free Admission for artist and guest to King's Ball and Poster Unveiling	• Custom Plaque • Free Yearly LAENI Membership • Free Admission for artist and guest to King's Ball and Poster Unveiling

 **DOWNLOAD ENTRY FORM AND CONTEST RULES**

For more information contact:
Hannah Bee- Poster Unveiling Chair
337-342-3936 | spanishfestivalsponsorships@gmail.com

HOW TO ENTER

Submit your completed entry form and artwork together.



ADVANCE SUBMISSION

May 15th – August 1st
McGee Scott Realty
222 Fulton Street
New Iberia, LA 70560



FINAL SUBMISSION

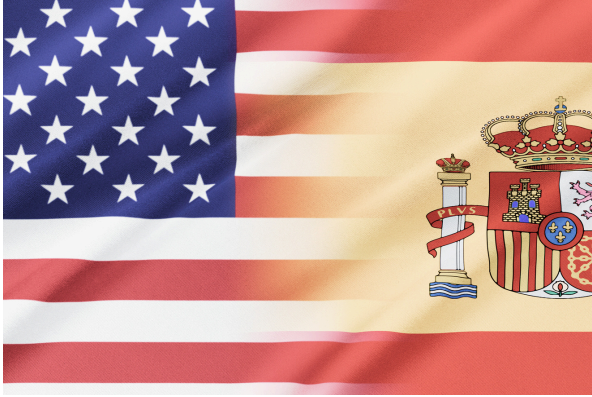
August 3rd | 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Iberia Parish Library- Main Branch
445 E. Main Street
New Iberia, LA 70560



DIGITAL ENTRIES

Email to:
spanishfestivalsponsorships@gmail.com





FUN FACT

SPAIN FUNDED THE REVOLUTION (LITERALLY!)
WHEN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NEEDED CASH,
SPAIN STEPPED UP!

Royalty Travels

OUR ROYALTY HAS BEEN BUSY IN 2025,
TRAVELING THE STATE AND REPRESENTING OUR BELOVED
FESTIVAL BEAUTIFULLY! HERE'S A QUICK TRAVEL LIST
OF OUR MISS QUEENS MOST RECENT ADVENTURES!

2nd Quarter Travels

Miss Cameron Festival Pageant
Fur Festival Festival
Italian Festival Ball
New Iberia Mardi Gras Parade
LAFF Convention
Bacchus Barn Guest Party Oak Forest Academy Visit
Ponchatoula Festival Ball
Strawberry Festival Day Events
Bacchus Parade and Ball
Scott Boudin Festival Ball
Scott Boudin Festival Queen Day Events
Scott Boudin Festival Pageant
Amite Oyster Festival Day Events
Los Islenos Festival
LA Crawfish Festival Day Events
Acadiana Live Interview
Rayne Frog Festival Pageant
Washington Parish Balloon Festival Pageant

Hola



3rd Quarter Travels:

Mississippi interview
Scott Boudin Festival
Scott Boudin Festival Queen Day Events
Acadiana Live Interview #2
Italian Festival
Italian Festival Day Events
St. John Francis Regis Church Etouffee Festival
Plaquemine Parish Seafood Festival
Plaquemine Parish Seafood Festival Queen Day Events
La Fete Du Monde Festival
La Cattle Festival Pageant
La Cattle Festival Baby Pageant
Breau Bridge Crawfish Festival
Rayne Frog Festival
Rayne Frog Festival Queen Day Events
Boggy Bayou Festival
Boggy Bayou Festival Queen Day Events
Rayne Frog Festival 2nd visit





2025 Festival Recap

NEW IBERIA, THE LOST TREASURE: RECOVERING MEMORIES

THE 11TH ANNUAL EL FESTIVAL ESPAÑOL DE NUEVA IBERIA WAS HELD THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 11 – 13, 2025, IN THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN OF NEW IBERIA AT BOULIGNY PLAZA.



Thank You for Celebrating with Us!

ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE TEAM BEHIND THE 2025 SPANISH FESTIVAL, WE WANT TO EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION SUCH A VIBRANT SUCCESS. TO OUR PERFORMERS, VENDORS, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND ESPECIALLY OUR INCREDIBLE GUESTS — GRACIAS FOR BRINGING YOUR ENERGY, PASSION, AND SUPPORT. YOUR PARTICIPATION HELPED US CREATE AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE FILLED WITH CULTURE, MUSIC, FOOD, AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

LAENI *Closing Remarks*

We take great pride in highlighting the rich cultural heritage of Spain alongside you, and we're already looking forward to making next year's festival even better!
Your support, enthusiasm, and love for our community continue to inspire us as we work to preserve and celebrate the vibrant traditions that make New Iberia so special.

Together, we are keeping our heritage alive and passing it on to future generations.

Mark your calendars!

Be sure to join us for our upcoming events throughout the year and save the date for Spanish Festival 2026, happening April 17-19.

We can't wait to celebrate with you again!

*Save
THE
Date*



New Iberia
SPANISH FESTIVAL 2026
THEME ANNOUNCEMENT:
**SPAIN ON
THE BAYOU**

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Join us as we honor the rich Spanish Heritage of New Iberia and its powerful ties to American Independence!

In 2026, we celebrate the untold stories of courage, culture, and unity - When Spain stood beside the young United States in its struggle for liberty.

 **APRIL 17-19, 2026**

 **BOULIGNY PLAZA | 102 W. MAIN STREET
DOWNTOWN NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA**

- Historical Reenactments & Educational Exhibits
- Authentic Spanish & Louisiana Cuisine
- Flamenco, Zydeco, & Cajun Dance
- Parade, Arts, & lots of Family Fun

**LET'S BRING HISTORY TO LIFE- FROM THE BAYOUS OF LOUISIANA TO
THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE REVOLUTION!**

**¡VIVA ESPAÑA!
¡VIVA LA LIBERTAD!**



**EL BAILE DEL REY,
THE KING'S BALL
OCT. 3, 2025**

CYR GATES COMMUNITY
CENTER
NEW IBERIA CITY PARK
300 PARKVIEW DR.

**SPANISH FESTIVAL
CHILDREN'S &
QUEEN'S PAGEANT
OCT. 4, 2025**

CYR GATES COMMUNITY
CENTER
NEW IBERIA CITY PARK
300 PARKVIEW DR.

**12TH ANNUAL NEW
IBERIA SPANISH
FESTIVAL**

BOULIGNY PLAZA
102 W. MAIN STREET
NEW IBERIA, LA