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ous festivals. Watsonville City Councilman Oscar Rios, a committee member and one of the original festival organizers, headed this year's effort.

Rios said this is the first year the festival has lost money. He estimated that the committee will have to shell out between \$4,000 and \$5,000 from reserves, leaving about \$5,000 in the till. Sponsors who had made contributions to the festival in the past were unable to do so this year because of weak finances, Rios said.

Part of the money from the festival is used for scholarships for local youths. Last year the committee awarded six scholarships of \$500 each. Rios said the committee will soon start work on the Mexican Independence Day festival, which is scheduled to take place at the Plaza in September. The traditional Mexican Independence Day, which commemorates Mexico's independence from Spain, is celebrated Sept. 16.

Rios hopes more sponsors will take part in the September festival, which he called "Cinco de Mayo Part II."

Cinco de Mayo festivals are held in many cities throughout the United States to celebrate Mexico's struggle against the French. On May 5, 1862, a small band of poorly armed peasants beat back a much larger and better-armed invading French army. The battle symbolized Mexico's resolve for liberty and self-determination.

Watsonville Mayor Lowell Hurst called the festival an important cultural event and pointed out that struggles for freedom and self-determination are still going on around the world.

"Those are things that all people can identify with," he said.

Watsonville Police Capt. Chuck Carter said no incidents or traffic problems were reported, calling the festival a "problem-free event." It helped that no alcohol was sold at the event, he said.

Carter said police were assisted by security personnel provided by festival organizers. Several members of the local chapter of the Brown Berets also helped with security. These two groups met with police before the event to discuss security precautions.

The irony of having police and the Brown Berets working together made Carter chuckle. About 20 years ago, the police and the Brown Berets, a militant national organization pushing for Chicano rights, were, at best, adversaries and had several well-publicized violent clashes.

"I can't remember ever working together," Carter said. "Things change."

Anyone interested in contacting Rios or the committee may call 724-9005.



Photos by Kurt Ellison

Events

Mariachi Juvenil entertained the Cinco de Mayo crowd yesterday at the Plaza on Main Street.

## 5,000 turn out for Cinco de Mayo festivities

By EMILIO ALVARADO  
STAFF WRITER

Sunny skies but breezy conditions greeted more than 5,000 people who attended the Cinco de Mayo celebration in downtown Watsonville yesterday.

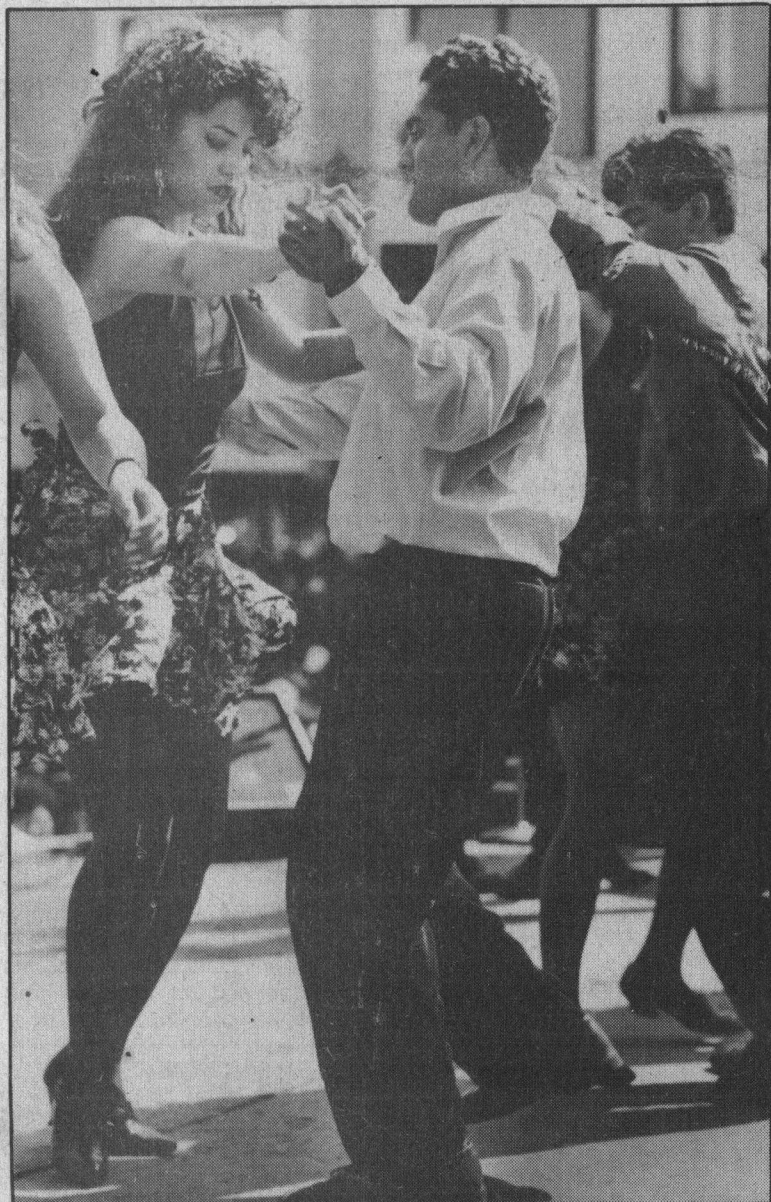
Festival-goers were treated to music, food and several groups of folklorico dancers. Arts and crafts booths were also featured, and several organizations set up exhibition and information tables. Santa Cruz County Supervisor Ray Belgard, who is running for re-election, worked the crowd. He was accompanied by District Attorney Art Danner.

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It was the first time in the festival's five-year history that Main Street was closed off between Beach and Maple streets. In previous years Union Street, which runs next to the Plaza and sees little traffic, was closed off.

A stage was set up at Main and Beach streets, where folklorico dancers from Las Maribelas del Penny Club and Ritmo Sabroso Salsa performed. Musical groups Mariachi Nuevo Jalisco and Banda Azteca de Oro also performed on stage. A mariachi band strolled through the crowd, inspiring at least one festival-goer to sing lead with the band.

The festival was sponsored by the Fiestas Patrias Committee, which has sponsored all previ-



The UCSC group Ritmo Sabroso danced the merengue on the Cinco de Mayo stage.

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