

Santa Cruz gives a birthday party

By RICK CHATENEVER
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AFTER A SUMMER spent entertaining tourists and other visitors, Saturday marks an occasion for Santa Cruz County residents to gather and celebrate. It's our birthday — the anniversary of the arrival of the first Europeans in what was to become Santa Cruz. That's plenty enough excuse for a parade and fiesta.

The third annual Santa Cruz Mission Fiesta — a return to the communitywide local celebrations of the 1930's — has a full schedule of events set for Saturday. There is definitely a local focus on the activities, intended to recall not only the first Europeans, but also the Indian culture they found in the late-1700's when they put up the cross and began construction on the mission building here.

The mission itself has seen better days since that time, and focusing attention on the need for its restoration is part of what the fiesta is all about, according to Edna Kimbro, chairman of the Adobe Coalition. But the full day of activities, beginning with a huevos rancheros breakfast at 7:30 in the Holy Cross parish hall and continuing with the 11 a.m. parade up the Pacific Avenue Mall to Mission Plaza Park, will also allow the expected 5,000-6,000 local spectators ample opportunities to remember this area's Indian and Hispanic roots.

Local resident William Shakespeare is the chairman of this year's fiesta. More than 60 groups will take part in the hour-long parade through the downtown area, leading to the fiesta site. There, visitors will find some 60-65 booths, offering food, games and information.

In three short years the parade has become a tradition in its own right, a delightful array of



The Wells Fargo stagecoach will take part in the Fiesta parade

marching people, animals, buggies, antique cars, politicians, and the E Clampus Vitus Band. In their red longjohns and outlandish garb, the E Clampus members interpret the command "parade rest" as an excuse to lie down and rest in the street. That's quite a contrast to the Air Force Band of the Golden Gate, who will also be on hand.

The Wells Fargo Bank's famous stagecoach will also join the parade, loaded with members of the Santa Cruz City Council and U.S. Congressman Leon Panetta.

A full slate of entertainment is on tap at the Mission Park Plaza and in the adjacent buildings. The mission itself will ring to the classical guitar stylings of Kenny Hill, and the music of early California as interpreted by Doradus. Meanwhile, a Mexican Folkloric Dance Festival will fill the Holy Cross Parish Hall with happy sounds and colorful sights from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Among the featured groups will be the Watsonville-based Esperanza de Ville and children's ensemble Los Niños de Atzlan.

Some 20 groups — including the Santa Cruz Town Band, the all-women bluegrass group Sidesaddle, the Ethnographic Orchestra, the Pan Steel Drum Band and Watsonville-based salsa combo TropiCali — will entertain through the afternoon.

A chicken barbecue will continue from 11 a.m. until dusk, and those who want to walk off the meal can join a guided historic walking tour of the Mission Hill historic district, leaving on the hour.

The tours will take strollers back to the 1850s and '60s when Mission Hill was the center of Santa Cruz, complete with hotels, billiard parlors, grocery stores, county offices and even the local jail, according to Kimbro.

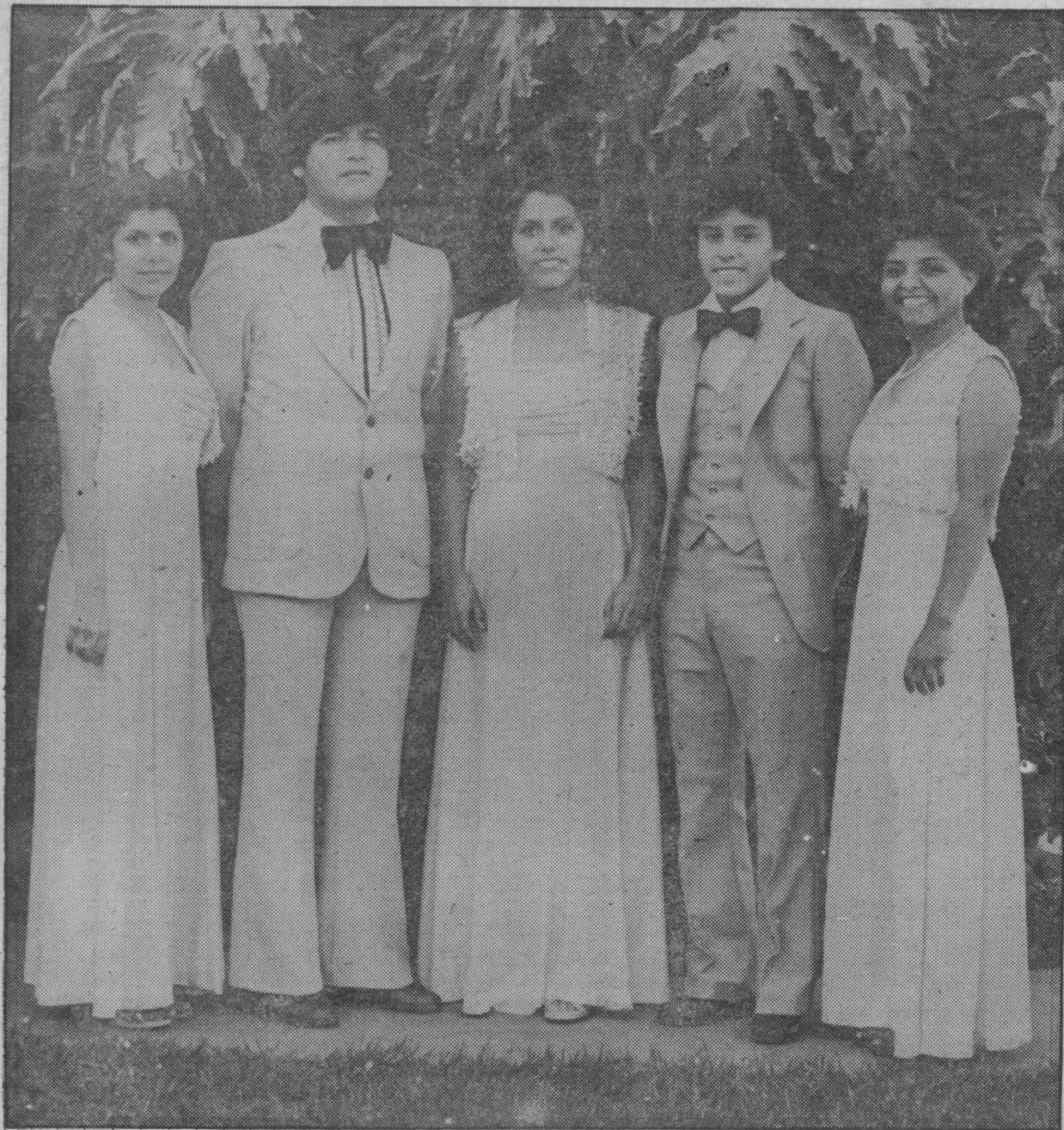
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For children who may tire of booth-hopping and the like, the city Parks and Recreation Department will coordinate activities for young people from 11 a.m. until dusk behind Holy Cross Hall. Representatives of the American Storytelling Institute will also be on hand in the Mission Chapel Garden to entertain children of all ages until 4 p.m.

Parade awards will be announced from centerstage in the Plaza beginning at 1 p.m., and the comical E Clampus Vitus Band will provide accompaniment for the dedication ceremony and unveiling of a Santa Cruz Mission landmark plaque in the plaza, beginning at 2 p.m.

As opposed to other traditional fairs and pageants in Santa Cruz, the Mission Fiesta "is not very outward oriented," says Kimbro. "There's definitely a local focus. Also, last year at the fiesta, there were as many people speaking Spanish as English. We're trying to make everyone proud of that part of our heritage. Basically it provides an opportunity for the people of the county to look at themselves."

And, she might add, to have a good time.



TropiCali will play Saturday in front of Holy Cross Church