

Cinco de Mayo, Santa Cruz style

Holiday - Cinco de Mayo 5-4-02

SANTA CRUZ — Students at Good Shepherd Catholic School got in the fiesta spirit on Friday, twirling and toe-tapping to traditional Mexican mariachi music. The school's 7th Annual Cinco de Mayo celebration had students from kindergarten to 8th grades dancing the 'La Raspa,' the 'La Bamba,' and several other popular Mexican folkloric dances. A Mexican lunch was also served. The day was not all fun and games, though. Students took part in a history lesson on the May 5, 1862, Battle of Puebla, which is the basis for the holiday.

RIGHT: Ángel Díaz provides some Cinco de Mayo music at the Good Shepherd School on Friday.

BELOW: Good Shepherd students Hannah Belair, Caroline Marani and Chelsea Forgatsch celebrate with a Mexican dance while dressed in Mexican skirts.

Bill Lovejoy / Sentinel photos



Farmers key to original Cinco de Mayo victory

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WATSONVILLE

If not for the determination of poor farmers, Sunday might be just another day to Mexicans and Mexican-Americans alike.

However, the determined farmers of Puebla, a small town near Mexico City, claimed victory over the well-armed and better-trained French forces who greatly outnumbered them at the May 5, 1862, Battle of Puebla.

This weekend, lots of locals, and not just those of Mexican descent, will celebrate Cinco de Mayo.

In fact, the holiday has become a symbol of inspiration for farmworkers, according to Oscar Rios, spokesman for Fiestas Patrias. The nonprofit community group organized this weekend's celebration in Watsonville, which is one of the largest in the Monterey Bay region.

"It is so admirable — poor peasants with nothing were able to win a battle against more powerful forces," said Rios.

"It signifies that, with the conditions going on today, it is easy to say we can stand up and change things," Rios added, referring to the often low wages and lack of affordable housing or health care some farm workers face.

The fiesta has been held in Watsonville each year since 1990. The celebration, held at the historic plaza downtown, played a vital role in boosting the city's economy following

Cinco de Mayo celebrations

TODAY

■ **Aptos: Community Cinco de Mayo: Honoring Our Farmworkers**, today, 2 p.m. at the Cabrillo College Theater, 6500 Soquel Drive. Admission based on a sliding fee scale, free to \$10. Features Mexican corridos sung by Daniel Valdez of El Teatro Campesino; Mexican folkloric dance by Las Mejicas, a UC Santa Cruz dance troupe, and Grupo Folklorico Golden Torch, a children's dance group; Latin-American refreshments and crafts; and bilingual books.

SUNDAY

■ **Davenport: Cinco de Mayo Festival**, Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. at the Davenport Resource Center, 100 Church St. Free admission. Features mariachi music, folk dancing by the White Hawks, pinatas, crafts, Mexican food and a raffle. Proceeds benefit the resource center. For information, call 425-8115.

■ **Watsonville: Cinco de Mayo Festival**, Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. at the Downtown Plaza, at the corner of Main and East Beach streets. Free admission. Features authentic Mexican food, mariachi music, traditional Aztec dance, and Latino popular bands, including Banda Sausalito, East L.A. Sabor Factory, Mariachi Eleazar Cortes, Esperanza del Valle, and Sonido Tropical.

MONDAY

■ **Aptos: OLA Cinco de Mayo Celebration**, Monday, 3 p.m. at the Cabrillo College Amphitheater, 6500 Soquel Drive. Sponsored by the Organization for Latin Americans, or OLA. Features music, food and games.

the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, according to Rios.

It is also a chance for the Latino community to celebrate the culture and heritage of Mexico, as well as share that culture with the greater-Santa Cruz area, said Sayo Fujioka, event organizer. Between 7,000 and 10,000 people attended last year's event, she said.

"The food and music are incredible — very authentic," said Fujioka. The day will feature

mariachi music, traditional Aztec dance and popular Latino bands.

Proceeds from the celebration benefit youth scholarships through Fiestas Patrias. In keeping with its family-oriented theme, alcoholic beverages are not permitted at the event, organizers say.

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