



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Rigoberto Cantu of the band Los Cadetes de Linares de Rigoberto Cantu delight a huge crowd Sunday in downtown Watsonville during a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Cinco de Mayo celebrations aplenty

Holiday - Cinco de Mayo

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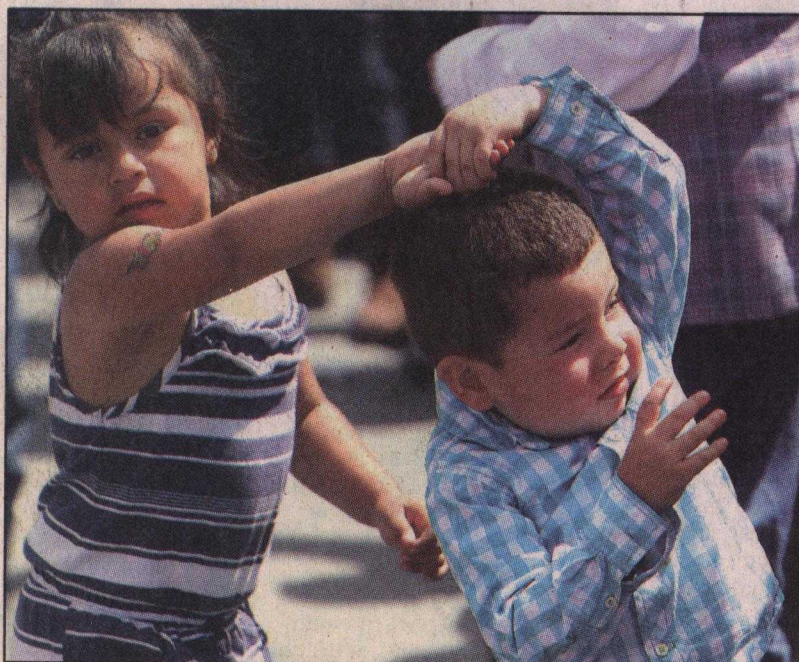
Festive events take place Sunday and Monday across city

By TARMO HANNULA
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WATSONVILLE — Under sunny skies and an occasional mild breeze the 25th annual Cinco de Mayo celebration took place Sunday in downtown Watsonville.

The alcohol and tobacco-free, family-oriented event drew thousands of people to soak in the live music and fun. Five bands dominated Main Street, which was shut down for the event along with nearby Peck Street. Numerous food booths offered a wealth of grilled, chilled, roasted or baked foods.

"We are in our 25th year of having great family fun celebrating an important cultural history," said chief organizer Oscar Rios, union representative Teamsters Local 890. "It's great that we are having, once again, such a huge response. This just isn't people from Watsonville; people come from all over to hear these live bands. There's a lot of tal-



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These children enjoy dancing to live music.

ent here today. We do this because we have to keep culture alive and going forward."

From banda to mariachi and ranchero to Norteño, hundreds of people, young and old took to the streets to dance away the afternoon to the lively mix of Mexican music.

"We are very happy to be playing here again in Watsonville," said bandleader and lead vocalist Rigoberto Cantu of the Jalisco, Mexico-based group, Los Cadetes de Linares de Rigoberto Cantu. "I can see a number of my fans are here and that is important to me. Every time we play here we are well received. Watsonville is a special crowd and we love playing for this city."

Sponsored by Fiestas Patrias de Watsonville, the celebration spreads out on a section of Main Street, Peck Street and Watsonville Plaza. Cinco de Mayo, or the Fifth of May,



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Angela Vidal (from left), Dolores Fuentes and Elvira Sandoval placed first, second and third, respectively, in the "best dressed" contest Monday at the Watsonville Senior Center during their Cinco de Mayo celebration.

CINCO

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commemorates the Battle of Puebla, where a 4,500-member Mexican army of men, women and children defeated sophisticated French troops on May 5, 1862. Though heavily outnumbered, the Mexicans defeated an army that had gone undefeated for almost 50 years.

Jose Caballero of Watsonville said he has attended the event many times of the past several years. He showed up again Sunday with his family.

"It's always a good time for us," he said. "I enjoy the music and the dancing. There's always good food."

Meanwhile, on Monday Cinco de Mayo celebrations continued with dancing to live music at the Watsonville Senior Center. Many of the lunchtime guests showed in fine traditional Mexican attire. They dined on Mexican cuisine.

Then, during their noontime break, students at Watsonville High School were treated to disc jockey music, a car and bike show and other activities.



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The Mexican flag flies from a custom-made bicycle Monday at Watsonville High School during their lunch-time celebration of Cinco de Mayo.



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Thousands of people swarmed the plaza and Main Street during the festivities.