Cinco de Mayo Celebration

"La Educacion, El Arte, La Politicia: Strengthening the Ties to Our Cultura."

at

Fresno City College

May 1-4, 2001
Tuesday, May 1

11:30 a.m.
*Opening Day
*Valley Chicano Poets:
Juan Felipe Herrera and
Margarita Robles
*Student Poets
College Center

Wednesday, May 2
Dia de Los Niños

12 noon Clovis Marimba
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Pinata, Face Painting, and food

Thursday, May 3
Dia de Educacion Y Politica

Guest Speaker: Pablo Gonzalez
“Spiritual Path to Success”
11:00 a.m., Theatre
Guest Speaker: Daniel Chacon
Chicano Author
7:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m.
College Center

Friday, May 4
The Celebration Day

10:00 a.m. - 10:45 p.m.
Mariachi Procession
begins at the front of the Library
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Speaker: David Salomon
12:00 p.m.
Crowning of the Cinco de Mayo
Queen
12:15 p.m.
Anahuac Folkloric Dancers
Aguilas de Oros
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Grito Contest &
Dance Contest
(10:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.)
Food Booths

El Cinco de Mayo

We will always remember with just pride the immortal date which recalls the glorious triumph of Mexico over the French army. First in the world of those times, the French army thought to conquer the country with relative ease, though they paid dearly for its audacity.

France’s Napoleon the III saw in Mexico what he anticipated to be an easy way to add lustre to French arms. Using non-repayment of debt as an excuse for intervention, he could come away with part of Mexico’s national territory and a French colony could be established. Further, he planned to implement a monarchical government in Mexico.

Laurences, who commanded the French army, arrived in Veracruz on March 5, 1862. He was accompanied by several thousand well-trained, well-armed troops. He wrote to his government immediately, assuring it that the conquest of Mexico would be achieved with no conflict.

The illustrious Benito Juarez, President of Mexico, dedicated himself to the defense of the country, and exhorted all Mexicans to forget any differences of opinion and unite in the common defense.
General Don Ignacio Zaragoza was commander of the Mexican forces. On May 5, 1862, a date never to be forgotten in Mexican history, the first real battle took place. Zaragoza and his aides set up fortifications in the city of Puebla. He had about 2,000 men under his command. Not all were soldiers — Many were local Zapotocan Indians who volunteered to fight in defense of their native soil: all were poorly armed.

The 6,000 French soldiers, resplendent in their bright red pants and white hats, attacked three times, and each time were defeated by the smaller Mexican force. The invaders were humiliated. General Zaragoza reported to the President: “Our army has covered itself with glory.”

The battle immortalized the names of Zaragoza, Negrete, Berrizabel, Diaz, Mendez, Lamadrid, Escobedo, and Martinez. Today, the forts at Puebla remain an eternal sentinel of the bravery of the Mexican soldier.

Today, the Fifth of May (El Cinco de Mayo) is a very important holiday for Mexicans as well as Mexican-Americans. On every El Cinco de Mayo, the Mexican people remember and celebrate how their brothers fought bravely in Puebla in 1862.

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**GUEST SPEAKER**

**Daniel Chacon**

From Mexico City to “Aztlan, Oregon,” in bittersweet comic fables and through tales of frightening realism, Daniel Chacon captures the shrewd, furtive, and sometimes torturous ways by which Mexican-Americans manage to survive in intimidating territory—often only to trip themselves up.

Chacon’s Chicano Chicanery presents a baker’s dozen of short stories featuring switched identities (in both Mexico and the United States); an involuntary gang initiation; men’s betrayals of their friends and of themselves; and some slippery exploits at the law office and in the chicken-packing factory.

Are Chacon’s heroes and heroines sometimes ruthless and sometimes foolishly sentimental? Perhaps it’s because chicanery, whether it’s tricking others or sheer self-deception, is such an untrustworthy tool. Sometimes— even in the most practiced hands— it can suddenly turn into a fearsome weapon.

Born in California, Daniel Chacon graduated from CSU-Fresno and from the University of Oregon. He taught English for five years at Modesto Junior College, and now lives in southern Minnesota, where he teaches at Southwestern State University. His stories have been published in literary journals including The new England Review, The Bilingual Revue, The Americas Review, ZYZZYVA, and Rivers’ Edge.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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