

What's HAPPENING

Guide to Local Arts, Entertainment & Events

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Nicaragua Friendship Day

by Malcolm Mannes



The air was electric with excitement as thousands of Eugeneans gathered to hear Igñi Tawonka from Nicaragua and Grupo Moncada from Cuba play under sunny skies, to eat delicious food, and to support a humanitarian effort. That was last year.

This year, the 8th Annual Nicaragua Friendship Day/Fiesta In The Park, one of Eugene's most popular summer events, will take place Thursday, July 16, at 5 pm in Skinner's Butte Park. Last year, the community turned out in record numbers to support this gala celebration, and this year's event promises to be just as exciting.

Produced by the Council for Human Rights in Latin America, the theme of the Fiesta is Fun and Fundraising. Last year over \$6,000 was raised to ship medical supplies to Nicaragua. This year the goal is to raise the same amount or more to ship food and more medical supplies.

The Fiesta features five local

bands representing a variety of distinctive styles. Shumba will rock the crowd with their ever-popular African marimba rhythms; the Peter Thorpe Band plays blues; Fiddlin' Sue, Uncle T & Johnny present foot-stompin' folk tunes; Sandunga and Caliente add Latin folk and Salsa respectively.

Originally, the Council planned on bringing the Nicaraguan band Cawibe, but the U.S. State Department

would not allow them a visa to come to Oregon.

Special guest will be Leonora Huper, the Consul General of the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, D.C. Formerly ambassador to Costa Rica, Ms. Huper will be representing her government at the gathering where she is expected to thank the people of Oregon, and Eugene in particular, for their continued support and humanitarian assistance.

Another special guest will be Pancho Letelier. Son of Orlando Letelier, former Chilean ambassador to the U.S. who was assassinated by the Pinochet regime, Pancho is a celebrated muralist who has permanent works displayed in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Nicaragua and elsewhere. In 1979 Letelier was in Coos Bay to paint a mural at the Longshoreman's Hiring Hall (ILWU Local 12). Most familiar to Eugeneans, however, is the mural he painted at the Wesley Center at 1236 Kincaid St.

Letelier will be leading the community in painting a mural at the Fiesta. Plans are being made to ship the mural, or parts of it, to Nicaragua as a gift of friendship.

This year the Fiesta will be featuring more food booths offering a greater variety and

volume than in the past.

Several of the Saturday Market booths will be present, as well as the Council's popular Latin American Kitchen. The latter organization will be serving empanadas, potato salad with homemade mayonnaise, chips with fresh green salsa, french bread, flan and more.

There will be a sale of handmade crafts from throughout Latin America, as well as



Pancho Letelier painting the Wesley Center Mural.

CHRLA T-shirts featuring two new designs and the Council's old favorite.

New this year will be a children's area featuring many games and activities. Scheduled are pony rides, pinatas, face-painting, prizes, bubbles and balloons.

As at last year's Fiesta, commemorative buttons will be sold to raise money. "Because of U.S. trade embargos, there is a premium on shipping costs to Nicaragua," according to Robert Guitteau, spokesman for the Council. "Without the Fiesta's financial support, last year's supplies would not have reached women's or children's hospitals throughout Nicaragua."

This year the money raised will also go towards shipping costs. "Supplying food is seen as being most important this year," Guitteau said. "Not on-

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Detail of the Wesley Center Mural.

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