

Cinco de Mayo celebrated

Woman stresses pride, calls for Chicano unity

Margarita Mendosa de Sugiyama, a teaching assistant at Washington State University and a national vice president of the YWCA, spoke on the Chicano in higher education to a crowd of about 100 persons at the Cinco de Mayo celebration Saturday afternoon at Lane Community College.

"The kind of mobility that we as Chicanos have in higher education and in American society depends on not just how we feel about ourselves as Chicanos, what that fervor is, but how we extend ourselves and how we

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Of the Emerald

can force ourselves into a system that has tried to make us very homogeneous, made us very American."

Sugiyama stressed that the melting-pot theory society. She said that using the melting-pot, "you cut out a race, you cut our la raza's heart (the people's), its soul and you put it in a pot and melt it down so that we are all the same."

"And this cannot be," she said. "It can't be, for the kind of pride that we have as being Mexicanos, Chicanos, Hispanos, whatever we call ourselves, must not just exist but it must be sustained by getting across to those that have the power, that make decisions for us, about us, so that the understanding of where our commitment is, what our history is and who we are must be shared by those that make the decisions."

"For until that time you will find, such as I understand at the University of Oregon, programs that are specifically set up to serve our needs are abandoned," she said.

Sugiyama told about the Chicano's commitment, first to the family, then to the school. She said this is the reason for the high Chicano drop-out rate and said that Chicanos must be aggressive and make people more understanding and responsive to the needs of the minority student.

Sugiyama mentioned that many Americans have always looked at the Chicano as he is depicted in books, as a "wetback," a farmworker and are not willing to look at him as an Aztec king or a great general.

"It is time that we not only share our grief, our frustrations, our unhappiness but we share the cultural beauty, the cultural enrichment which the people in American have been denied," she said.

She appealed to all Chicanos and Chicanas to unite in order "to draw strength from each other, to get together and be able to help each other...we must remember that we must have the power base where we are, we must have support from each other."

On the topic of equality she said that Chicanos are not equal and will not be equal until, "we are in the same educational level and the same economic level."

In her concluding statement she said, "It there is no struggle, there is no progress. We need to be in power positions where we can help the movimiento, the Chicano, and to help the administrations for they are a decadent group. They are not even relevant to the white students anymore. So its time that we start relevance for people. People Power! Chicano Power! Viva la Huelga!"



Photo by Gene Balcomb

A fashion show presented by Chicano students from Lane Community College. High School Equivalency Program, the University and the Job Corps was part of the Cinco de Mayo celebration last weekend.

Reporter traces history of Mexican struggle

By RUBEN YZQUIERDO
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In reference to the Cinco de Mayo celebration many people on campus have asked, "What is Cinco de Mayo?"

One student candidly offered, "It is Mexico's Fourth of July." Well, not quite.

Roberto Olmos, a special assignment reporter for *The Oregonian*, was one of the keynote speakers at the Cinco de Mayo celebration held at the University last Friday. Olmos gave his interpretation of the significance of the celebration to the Chicano in the United States.

He began with a history of the situation in Mexico. Olmos told the audience of about 100 persons that in 1861 Mexico "was a land torn apart by a savage civil war." This civil war caused commotion in England, France and Spain. The reformers were tired of all the military dictatorships that Mexico had endured and they were determined to end European rule in Mexico.

A man named Benito Juarez who, according to Olmos was, "a cold and implacable man who to almost everyone personified reform," became president on June 11, 1861. The civil war continued and the Europeans decided to put an end to it. In December, 1861 England and Spain sent troops to Veracruz but the Mexicans made no defensive effort. France intervened in

January, 1862 and still the Mexicans had no defense.

Tired of all the oppression, the Mexicans under Ignacio Zaragoza, a young general from the civil war, began a retaliation against the French. The battle occurred in the town of Puebla. The French were defeated and the Mexicans had their day of celebration. "And here," Olmos said, "is the reason we celebrate the fifth of May, The Cinco de Mayo. Remember that name, Puebla, because it is the foundation on which rests the Mexican nation."

"Why do we as Chicanos," he asked, "wish to celebrate Cinco de Mayo when many of us perhaps have never even set foot on Mexican soil? A similar question could be asked of Irish-Americans on St. Patrick's Day or of Italian-Americans on Columbus Day."

Olmos said, "As persons of Mexican descent we bring out the eagled flag, not because we owe allegiance to it over Old Glory, but more because in this day we hold it up out of respect for our forefathers." He continued by saying that Chicano ancestry "most likely was lived under the red, white and green than under the red, white and blue."

He said that Chicanos don't want to forget their origins.

"We do not," he concluded, "want to be washed over by a tide of total assimilation that makes us seem like everyone else. We want to hold on to our identity and be made richer because of it."

Monday, May 7, 1973



Photo by Steve Tward

The first day of Cinco de Mayo events were centered at the University. On Saturday participants moved to Lane Community

College for another full day of activities concluding with "Comida Mexicana," a Mexican dinner.