

History of Cinco de Mayo

Contributed Story

Cinco de Mayo is a date of great importance for the Hispanic communities. It marks the victory of the Mexican Army over the French at the Battle of Puebla. Although the Mexican army was eventually defeated, the "Batalla de Puebla" came to represent a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism. With this history, Mexico demonstrated

to the world that Mexico and all of Latin America were willing to defend themselves against any foreign intervention especially those from imperialist states bent on world conquest.

Cinco de Mayo's history has its roots in the French Occupation of Mexico. The French occupation took shape in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War of 1846-48. With this war, Mexico entered a period of national crisis during the 1850's. Years of not only fighting the Americans but also a Civil War, had left Mexico devastated and bankrupt.

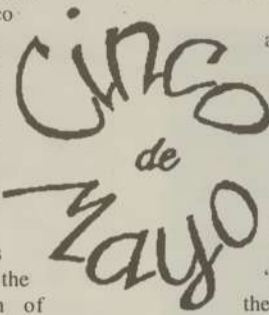
On July 17, 1861, President Benito Juarez issued a moratorium in which all foreign debt payments would be suspended for a brief period of two years, with the promise that after this period, payments would resume.

The English, Spanish and French refused to allow President Juarez to do this, and instead decided to invade Mexico and get payments by whatever means necessary. The Spanish and English eventually withdrew, but the French refused to leave.

Their intention was to create an empire in Mexico under Napoleon III. Some have argued that the true French occupation was a response to growing American power and to the Monroe Doctrine (America for the Americans). Napoleon III believed that if the United States was allowed to prosper indiscriminately, it would eventually become a power in and of itself.

In 1862, the French army began its advance. Under General Ignacio Zaragoza, 5,000 ill-equipped Mestizo and Zapotec Indians defeated the French army in what has come to be known as the "Batalla de Puebla" on the fifth of May.

In the United States, the "Batalla de Puebla" came to be known as simply "5 de Mayo" and unfortunately, many people wrongly equate it with Mexican Independence which was on September 16, 1810, nearly a fifty year difference. Over the years Cinco de Mayo has become very commercialized and many people see this holiday as a time for fun and dance. Oddly enough, Cinco de Mayo has become more of Hispanic holiday than a Mexican one. Cinco de Mayo is celebrated on a much larger scale here in the United States than it is in Mexico. People of Mexican descent in the U.S. celebrate this significant day by having parades, mariachi music, folklorico dancing and other types of festive activities.



V-Chip - tool for parents

Eric Etherton
Staff Writer

The V-Chip was part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and in the minds of some, it was the key point of the act.

Until my colleagues brought it to my attention, I didn't even give it a passing thought - mainly because I didn't even know what the V-Chip was. However, now my thoughts are on this concept (please note I said concept, as this V-Chip isn't even in existence). Do I support it, or do I stand in opposition?

Let's weigh the arguments. First of all, why do we even have this idea?

Those who successfully lobbied for it argue about the excessive amount of sex, violence and profanity on television. This is especially evident between the hours of 8 and 11 p.m., which television honchos call "prime time." (However, the profanity is edited out with the help of bleeps and mutes.)

These lobbyists believe the V-Chip will help parents block out shows containing too much sex, violence and profanity.

The television networks have since developed a rating system. It works the same as the one which successfully serves the motion picture industry. It serves mainly as a preemptive strike against government's admonitions of



"regulate yourselves, or we'll regulate you."

A panel of judges will determine suitability of television shows on the criteria of sex, profanity and violence on a scale of 0 to 5 (5 being the maximum).

Parents, with the help of a special remote control, can set a maximum rating fit for their children to watch. The special remote control will block out shows with the higher ratings.

So why should I support or oppose it? Those who oppose it will cry "censorship." This being the same argument used against the ratings system in the motion picture industry and earlier this decade, the video game industry.

They assert that if the parents don't want their children to watch those shows, they need to take responsibility themselves and not leave it to government, who they fear will take away their rights to freely create, express or speak whatever they want to, if govern-

ment isn't doing that already.

But the censorship card being played notwithstanding, the major argument is that it's likely kids know more about how to work the remote than their parents. They can override the parents and watch whatever they please, at which point the V-Chip won't do one thread of good (except if a password program is also installed). To say nothing of older television sets, which are not required to have the V-Chip because the requirement for installing it only starts with televisions made after (I believe) this year.

Those who support it have an argument that finally parents can assert control over what their children watch on television, after years of an all-out assault on "family values." They have seen our society get less and less civil over the years. There has been a proliferation of various forms of inde-

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Join the Spanish Club

Tanya Hedbor
Contributing Writer

On April 20, some of the students from the CCC Spanish Club, Entre Amigos, went to see the Spanish/English bilingual play: Tierra del Fuego, with a presentation of Brazilian dancers.

The dancing was first with an exciting array of costumes and dance styles. Tierra del Fuego was about the island with the same

name, in Chile and its environmental concerns. Participants enjoyed the play, although there was less verbage in Spanish than many had hoped for.

It was a great way to spend a rainy afternoon. If you would like to participate in Hispanic Cultural events, come to the Spanish Club on Fridays 11 a.m. in B237.

Nos gustaria tener su participacion. Unanse a nosotros.

Euthanasia: the final choice

Laney Fouse
Copy Editor

In a video cassette titled The Right to Die (a Reed Community College presentation), two separate arguments on euthanasia were presented.

One argument stemmed from a legal standpoint and the other from an ethical one. Both medical and legal fields were represented. Their answers varied depending on which of the three hypothetical cases were being discussed.

The three cases included: an 18-year-old boy who refused a blood transfusion because of religious reasons, a woman who refused to have a Cesarean section to deliver her unborn fetus which only had a 15% chance of survival, and a 75-year-old man with terminal cancer.

In the case of the 18-year-old boy, doctors claimed his right to refuse treatment was honored because he was considered a rational human being.

The woman who refused to have a C-section was considered rational because her intentions were to let the natural process of dying happen.

The biggest argument against assisted suicide came when the 75-year-old man felt that continuing his life would be futile. He didn't want to go through the suffering he feared cancer caused, nor put his wife and family through the experience.

My stand against assisted suicide stems from a purely ethical point of view. Perhaps the 75-year-old man feels he has lived out his life. But, if he is making his

decision based on the fear of pain and suffering he thinks is ahead, his rationale cannot be considered to be logical.

If he refuses the drugs necessary to ward off his pain, as well as further medical care, he is making a decision to let nature take its course. This decision would then be made in a logical manner. He knows without medical attention he will not only suffer, but eventually die.

Some terminally-ill patients find that families tend to draw

"We are slowly but surely destroying ourselves. With abortion and euthanasia, how soon will it be before we meet in the middle?"

~A Native American Elder

closer during their illness. Oftentimes, closer relationships develop. Perhaps a better understanding of life is achieved by being a part of this dying process.

Such was the case in three very important relationships in my life.

My grandfather suffered a heart attack, which was further complicated by kidney failure. I was only 19 at the time, but the event still stands out strongly in my mind. I recall him being lucid for brief moments near the end.

My most vivid memory is when he asked the doctors to let him die in peace. They tried to convince our family otherwise, but

we held to our belief: that when it's time to die, the family just has to let it happen. Fortunately, his doctors were persuaded to let my grandfather go naturally.

Like the pregnant woman who refused the C-section, my dad refused open heart surgery. The doctors could not guarantee any improvement to his heart or way of life. My dad made a rational decision to refuse a futile attempt to alter the course of nature. This was over seven years ago and he is still enjoying his retirement.

As humans, we often take life for granted. If we know someone doesn't have long to live, we tend to make a concerted effort to spend more time with that person.

More recently, I lost a friend to terminal cancer. Marge refused treatment by radiation and was given only a year to live. She suffered greatly near the end, but not once did she complain. She constantly reminded me that "life is too short, but death is too long."

She proved to be one of most influential persons in my life. Without her encouragement, I wouldn't be here today doing what I love most: writing. She helped me to believe in myself. Had Marge chosen to end her life, like the 75-year-old man wanted to end his, I would not have had the privilege of knowing and learning from her.

Unfortunately, long-term solutions to such problems are often lost to society's passion of the moment. As a friend told me recently, "We are slowly but surely destroying ourselves. With abortion and euthanasia, how soon will it be before we meet in the middle?"

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