

Friday, May 3, 1991

The Battalion

Cinco de Mayo

Expert compares day in U.S., Mexico

By Susan Maguire
The Battalion

"It's not a major national celebration. However, it is one of the very biggest here."

—Dr. Henry Schmidt,
A&M history professor

Cinco de Mayo is a festive day, but the focus of the Mexican holiday has changed in the United States, said a Texas A&M history professor.

Dr. Henry Schmidt, an authority on Latin-American history, said over the past 20 or 30 years, Mexican-Americans have changed Cinco de Mayo into a celebration of the Mexican-American community, while Mexican citizens continue to concentrate on the patriotic meaning of the holiday.

Historically, Cinco de Mayo commemorates a battle between

Mexican rebels and a French army at Puebla, Mexico, on May 5, 1862.

The French were in Mexico to gain the Mexican throne and set up a puppet government. At Puebla, the French had a 3-to-1 advantage over the rebels.

The Mexicans, under Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza, armed themselves with machetes and defeated the invaders in hand-to-hand combat.

The French did not leave Mex-

ico until 1897, but the battle for Puebla bolstered the rebels' morale and heightened the people's resolve for an independent Mexico.

"In the 19th century, Mexico was a very weak country," Schmidt said. "It was constantly being threatened by other countries. The Mexican victory was a very important moment for Mexican nationalism."

Besides different reasons for celebrating Cinco de Mayo, the

types of festivities are different in America, Schmidt said.

"It is a general Mexican-American fiesta here," he said. "In one town there may be music and dancing, another might have poetry, and another might have a celebration for the charro, a Mexican cowboy."

In Mexico, along with the general merrymaking, there is a reenactment of the battle, parades and speeches.

Cinco de Mayo is celebrated in the United States more than in Mexico, Schmidt said.

"Cinco de Mayo has lost quite a bit of meaning in Mexico," he said. "It's not a major national celebration. However, it is one of the very biggest here."

Regent suffers stroke

Staff and wire reports

A&M Board of Regents member Billy Clayton was in good condition Thursday in an Austin hospital after suffering a mild stroke, a hospital nurse said.

Clayton, 62, former speaker of the Texas House of representatives and currently a lobbyist, was admitted Wednesday to St. David's Hospital.

He was elected from a rural Lubbock County district to the

House in 1962 and was first elected speaker in 1975. He served as speaker for four two-year terms.

Former Governor Bill Clements appointed Clayton to the Board in 1989.

Clayton is a Class of '50 A&M graduate with a bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics.

In 1988, Clayton served as president of the Texas A&M Association of Former Students.

In Advance

Richards, Sharp to speak at commencement

Gov. Ann Richards, State Comptroller John Sharp and Texas Transportation Institute Associate Director Dr. William Harris will speak at Texas A&M's spring commencement exercises.

Fred McClure, Class of '76 and a special assistant to President Bush, also will deliver the keynote address at the degree ceremony for doctoral candidates of veterinary medicine at 10 a.m. May 10 in Rudder Auditorium.

Richards will speak at 2 p.m. May 10 in G. Rollie White Coliseum for graduates and undergraduates in the education and engineering colleges, and graduates in the College of Medicine.

Sharp, Class of '72, will speak at 7:30 p.m. May 10 in the coliseum for graduates and undergraduates from the architecture, science and liberal arts colleges.

Harris will speak at 9 a.m. May 11 in the coliseum for graduates and undergraduates from the agriculture and business administration colleges, and for graduates from the geosciences and veterinary medicine colleges.

U.S. Navy Adm. Jerome Johnson, vice chief of naval operations in Washington, D.C., will administer the oath to new officers at 1:30 p.m. May 11 in the coliseum.

'I Am a Teacher' author to meet with educators

David Marshall Marquis, a teacher-playwright-actor, will meet with education students, teachers and the public from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday in 410 Rudder.

Marquis is best known for his one-man comedy about life in the classroom, "I Am a Teacher." He is expected to perform a few scenes from his play and visit with students.

University presents Distinguished Achievement Awards

Twenty-two members of the Texas A&M faculty and staff were presented Distinguished Achievement Awards — the highest honor given by A&M and the Association of Former Students — at the annual spring faculty-staff meeting Wednesday.

A \$4,000 cash prize, commemorative watch and plaque were presented to each award recipient by Bill Youngkin, Association of Former Students president, at Wednesday's ceremony.

Traditionally, the identity of the award winners is kept secret until announced at the meeting.

The 1991 award winners are:

Teaching

□ Dr. David Armstrong, professor of educational curriculum and instruction.

□ Dr. Forrest Burt, professor

of English, was recognized with the first posthumous Distinguished Achievement Award.

□ Dr. Newton Ellis, Class of '54, professor of industrial engineering.

□ Dr. Mark Holtzapfel, assistant professor of chemical engineering.

□ Dr. Make McDermott Jr., associate professor of mechanical engineering.

□ Dr. James Sanders, Class of '68, associate professor of animal science.

□ Dr. David Schob, associate professor of history.

□ Dr. Jane Sell, Class of '74, associate professor of sociology.

□ Dr. Winston Shearon Jr., associate professor of accounting.

□ Dr. Aydin Akgerman, professor of chemical engineering.

□ Sir Derek Barton, distinguished professor of chemistry.

□ Dr. Greta Fryxell, a professor of oceanography.

□ Dr. Michael Hitt, professor of management and holder of the T.J. Barlow Professorship in Business Administration.

□ Dr. William Johnson, distinguished professor of mathematics and holder of the Arthur George and Mary Emolene Owen Chair in Mathematics.

□ Dr. Henry Taylor, professor of electrical engineering, director of the TEES Institute of Solid State Electronics and holder of the Irma Runyon Chair in Electrical Engineering.

Student Relations

□ Kevin Carreathers, director of Multicultural Services.

□ Dr. Karan Watson, associate professor of electrical engineering.

Continuing Education Extension

□ Dr. Edward Smith, Class of '74, senior lecturer in agricultural economics and the Roy B. Davis Distinguished Professor of Agricultural Cooperation.

□ Dr. Michael Tomaszewski, professor of dairy science and extension dairy specialist.

Staff

□ Karola Feltz, Class of '81, administrative assistant in the Department of Mathematics.

□ Steven Hodge, University Center manager.

Administration

□ Dr. James D. McCrady, Class of '52, professor of veterinary physiology and pharmacology and director of special programs for A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine.

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