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Special Events

Happy Birthday to El Mercado!

By Brenda Blanchard

El Mercado's 29th birthday is the perfect opportunity to celebrate with friends in family. Instead of birthday cake, revelers will enjoy great live music, dancing and shopping at El Mercado, or Market Square, over Labor Day weekend, September 3-5.

"Basically, it's to celebrate with everyone who wants to come celebrate with us; it's our 29th year in this building," says Jaime Herrejon, president of the El Mercado Merchants Association. "It's mostly a celebration outside. The one thing that the City Council has said from the very beginning is they wanted this [the Market Square] to be a people place."

Locals and tourists alike can dance to a variety of music sounds in the Market Square. Or, if spectating is preferred, step inside the Farmer's Market Place where professional dancers light eyes with their beautiful moves and quick steps.

"We have a Peruvian group that is outside performing, using mostly woodwind instruments and guitars," adds Herrejon. "And then at night, we have Tejano, Country, Blues. We try to mix it up so there's a little bit of everything."

With right around 100 shops, items can be found from around the world, including countries like Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Philippines, India and China. There's something of interest for everyone. The many food booths offer a nice variety of cuisines as well. And you can even take home a caricature drawn by one of the local artists. Arts and crafts are available as you wind through the area.

"If anybody has ever been in Mexico on a Sunday and they see the plazas where everybody comes out with their wares and their artifacts, you're basically seeing that here," says Herrejon. "They have everything out in the walkways or in the streets. It's like you're experiencing Mexico, but here."



Celebrating Diez y Seis de Septiembre

By Karen Littleton

September 16, 1810, Father

Mon., Sept. 5, 2005



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Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's grito de Dolores ("cry of Dolores") at the village of Dolores near Guanajuato, Mexico, called for the end of Spanish rule in Mexico.

Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the priest known as the "father of Mexican independence," was born in 1753 near Guanajuato, Mexico. He was ordained a priest in 1779.



Until 1809, he pursued his priestly functions among his parishioners in Dolores. After Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808, the colonies, unwilling to accept a French ruler, Hidalgo and several of his friends engaged in preparations that the authorities considered treasonable.

Alerted by the arrest of a friend, Hidalgo gathered several hundred of his parishioners, and on September 16, 1810, they seized the prison at Dolores.

This action began the Mexican War of Independence.

At first, Hidalgo met with some success, but as many of his followers deserted, he lost heart and retreated after his forces were decisively defeated at Aculo in 1810, and at the bridge of Calder—n on R'o Santiago in 1811.

Hidalgo was later captured and, after being degraded from the priesthood, was shot as a rebel in August 1811.

Still inspired by Hidalgo's bravery and patriotism, on September 16, 1825, the Republic of Mexico officially declared September 16 its national Independence Day.

In Texas with its rich, Hispanic culture, Diez y Seis de Septiembre has been celebrated, especially in San Antonio, for more than 167 years.

Along with Cinco de Mayo, the holiday is one of the Fiestas Patrias celebrated by Mexican-Americans throughout the Southwest.

How does San Antonio commemorate this happy, historical day? Here are just a handful of events for the whole family to enjoy.

September 15-17, there's Fiestas Patrias. Market Square comes alive with colorful clothing, savory snacks, festive music and entertainment celebrating Diez y Seis. 502 West Durango, downtown. Free admission.

The Diez y Seis Parade and Festival. The 19th Annual Diez y Seis parade makes its way through the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood. Delicious food and drinks, live music and crafts for the entire family to enjoy. Guadalupe Plaza, at 1300 Guadalupe Street. Admission is free.

The Diez y Seis de Septiembre Dance Performance. Traditional dances from Mexico accompanied by traditional live music. Guadalupe Theater at Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1301 Guadalupe Street. For reservations and ticket prices, please call 210-271-3151 or 210-351-7787.

Fotoseptiembre USA

By Bonny Osterhage

If a picture speaks a thousand words, then the photographs exhibited during FOTOSEPTIEMBRE USA must be worth millions. In its 10th year and going strong, this international festival exhibits the work of photographers from many different countries in spaces all across San Antonio, the Hill Country and even down to the Texas Coast.



Michael Mehl, director and founder of FOTOSEPTIEMBRE, said that he and his wife began this concept in order to create a market for photography that really didn't exist in San Antonio. Through their experience, they discovered that individual photography exhibits lacked the impact found in a festival format complete with promotions and documentation. What began as a group of 12 exhibits has now grown into one of the largest photo festivals worldwide.



Part of what makes this festival unique is the eclectic work. Not only are professional photographers on display, but there are also works from amateurs, students, civic leaders and even at-risk youth in local photography programs. Aside from skill levels, participants differ in cultures and perspectives with photographers from many cities and countries taking this opportunity to showcase their flair. The range of talent is as diverse as it is vast.

The other area in which FOTOSEPTIEMBRE differs from other exhibits is in the fact that it is not confined to one area.

Instead, in an effort to keep it truly community based, FOTOSEPTIEMBRE is spread out with anywhere from 40-70 exhibits featured across the area. Exhibits will be on view from such well-known venues as the Witte Museum to the smallest spaces on the Southside and everywhere in between. Web Galleries and online exhibitions are also featured, adding to the advantage of FOTOSEPTIEMBRE over other shows.

Exhibits in the same parts of town tend to open at the same time offering convenience and the opportunity to see more exhibits at once. Once you find an opening near you, make an evening of it by finding a good restaurant in that same area, combining fine cuisine and art.

The work at these exhibits is of excellent quality as is evidenced by the fact that almost every exhibit experiences high levels of sales and many even sell out.

If you do happen to be visiting San Antonio during the month of September, put your own camera down for a second and check out this incredible exhibit. With so many different locations there is sure to be one in your area. Need added incentive? Purchasing a photo from FOTOSEPTIEMBRE would certainly make a more interesting souvenir than a snow globe of the Alamo!

For more information visit www.safotofestival.com

Jazz's Alive

By Bonny Osterhage

You probably don't think of San Antonio as a place to hear great jazz. But if you are a jazz lover, then you are in the right city because September 17-18, Jazz'SAlive will be returning to Travis Park for the 22nd year.

This free event, sponsored by the San Antonio Parks Foundation and the City of San Antonio, features live music on two stages and includes local as well as international talent.



The weekend actually kicks off on Friday, September 16 with a gala and

silent auction at the St. Anthony Hotel. This party is staged to benefit the Jazz'SAlive foundation and honor to the event's sponsors. Tickets are available to the public.

After the party, the fun really begins. Gates open at Travis Park at noon on Saturday and local artists will begin performing at 1 p.m. and continue into the early evening. Around 5 or 6 p.m. the main stage on Navarro gets cranked up with international jazz talent that lasts until 10 or 10:30 p.m. Although at print time this year's schedule has not yet been released, some of last year's performers included Warren Hill, Jeff Golub of Guitars and Saxes and Imani.

In addition to hearing great jazz for free, guests can enjoy food and beverages, arts and crafts booths and even a children's area with face painting and crafts where the kids to play. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs and get there early for a day of entertainment that the whole family can enjoy. Food booths will feature spicy boudin sausage, etoufee and jambalaya. Or stick to San Antonio flavors of gorditas, fajitas and aguas frescas. And if you can't make it Saturday, don't worry. The festival continues on through Sunday with the same hours.

Kick back, relax, and enjoy the smooth sounds of jazz San Antonio style. All proceeds benefit the San Antonio Parks Foundation.

Call 210-207-3025 for more information.

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