



THE BLADE/JEREMY WADSWORTH

Vanessa Espinosa, 6, poses for her dad, Angel Espinosa, during the 21st annual Bowling Green Cinco de Mayo celebration on April 27.

Cinco de Mayo!



Top: A U.S. stamp commemorating Cinco de Mayo. Bottom: A painting depicting the Battle of Puebla.



THE BLADE/JETTA FRASER

Cassandra Vargas of Toledo dances with El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico Dance Group at a 2012 event.

Events celebrate underdog victory of Mexican army over the French



By **FEDERICO MARTINEZ**
BLADE STAFF WRITER

It's considered one of the biggest upset victories in history.

Despite the odds, a ragtag group of mestizo and Zapotec peasants — poorly trained, undernourished, and armed with the most rudimentary of weapons — defeated a much larger, well-trained French army using heavy artillery.

The battle occurred on May 5, 1862, in the city of Puebla de Los Angeles, a small town in east-central Mexico. Although it would be another five years before the French were driven out of Mexico, the victory at Puebla became a symbol of Mexican resistance to foreign domination.

Officially known as the Battle of Puebla, the event is more commonly referred to as "Cinco de Mayo."

In Mexico, it is primarily a regional holiday, celebrated in Puebla, with festivities that include military parades, speeches, and re-enactments of the historic battle. In the United States, especially in communities with large Mexican-American populations, Cinco de Mayo has become more of a pop culture event that features music, dancing, and food.

In the Toledo area, there are many events held to commemorate Cinco de Mayo.

One of the most popular is the Toledo Zoo's annual Cinco de Mayo celebration that will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. today with music from DJ Tony Rios, performances by El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico Dance group, and plenty of opportunities for children to take a swing at candy-filled piñatas — a popular Mexican tradition. All activities are free with regular zoo admission.

Other organizations held earlier events, including Saturday's East Toledo Cinco de Mayo Festival sponsored by Glass City Customs and Bowling Green State University's celebration on April 27.

Despite its growing popularity, many people mistakenly believe that Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of Mexican independence, which was declared more than 50 years before the Battle of Puebla. Mexican Independence Day is recognized on Sept. 16, in honor of Mexico's independence from Spanish rule in 1810.

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Miyah Swan, 10, of Sylvania admires a flower she made at the Bowling Green event April 27.



THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGHT

Old West End Academy classmates wave the flag of Mexico while performing 'Raza De Mil Colores.'



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Bowling Green State University students Stacy Lopez and Jonathan Sabino dance at a Latino Networking Alliance celebration ahead of May 5.



Cheese nachos with guacamole and sour cream are a tasty appetizer.



Fresh crisp tacos are a Cinco de Mayo favorite.



Enchiladas, refried beans, and Spanish rice dinner.