

TAMEJAVI NEWS



Special Edition • Central Valley, California • April 26, 2002

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Education & Freedom

The story of Mai Vue, from Laos to teaching in Fresno.

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Hoz de Cuevas

They work in the fields and they play the songs that make a community to dance!

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Acting as a Way of Life

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FINALLY TAMEJAVI IS HERE!

Tamejavi News Editorial

Fresno, CA—Central Valley residents and visitors from other regions, arrived to the Tower District in Fresno to explore and celebrate California's cultural diversity. For three days participants will walk into a world of many distinct cultures, enjoying a mixing of the fields of art and community organizing coordinated by a rare cross-section of the Valley's ethnic communities.

Tamejavi is a unique experience involving several grass roots organizations and individuals representing several ethnic groups who came together to offer the best of the artistic and cultural expression of their communities. During the last eight months a group of CVP partners and members of the media and arts community took time to participate in the different areas during the process of organizing the festival. This is the Tamejavi spirit-reflected in the name: TAMEJAVI was created from the Hmong (Taj Laj Tshav Puam), Spanish (Mercado) and Mixteco (Nunjavi) meaning marketplace, a place to meet and exchange.

There is something for everyone. From the amazing three national acclaimed theater companies coming from the East Coast to present their "Promise of a Love Song" and offering several workshops to the theater classes presented by Argentina's maestro Ernesto Torchia.

A Cambodian Opera will share the same space with a Oaxacan band. Several journalists will dialogue about "Ethnic Media and Civic Participation," and braceros will share their working and social experiences during the 50's and 60's in California.

Also movies, dances and poetry will be present at Tamejavi. Young and not so young residents will be able to enjoy our cultures and learn from each other. Whether you walk around the outdoor marketplace or you sit down in Fresno's beautiful Tower Theater to enjoy a play, you'll feel the Tamejavi spirit-which you'll enrich by being part of this experience.

It is impossible to name all the people involved at Tamejavi-a lot of volunteers made this possible. Real Tamejavistas! We thank them all for working so hard.

Tamejavi wouldn't be possible without the generosity of the James Irvine Foundation, the great job of the Pan Valley Institute of the American Friends Service Committee and the enthusiasm and

energy of different groups and individuals.

During the next three days we'll experience Tamejavi, we'll drink Tamejavi-yeap, there is a Tamejavi drink! We'll breath and dream Tamejavi—because Tamejavi is us!



THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

Tamejavi News Bureau

When the Tamejavi organizing committee asked local painter John Sierra to create the image of the Festival, including a poster and the logo, he gladly accepted the challenge.

During his early stages as a painter Sierra was influenced by the Chicano art. Currently he feels he express himself beyond labels, reflecting his believes and cultural traditions. Portraying the richness of the Valley's cultural diversity was a relative new endeavor in his career as painter.

To create an artistic image that will communicate the spirit of the Tamejavi, John Sierra started by doing research about the

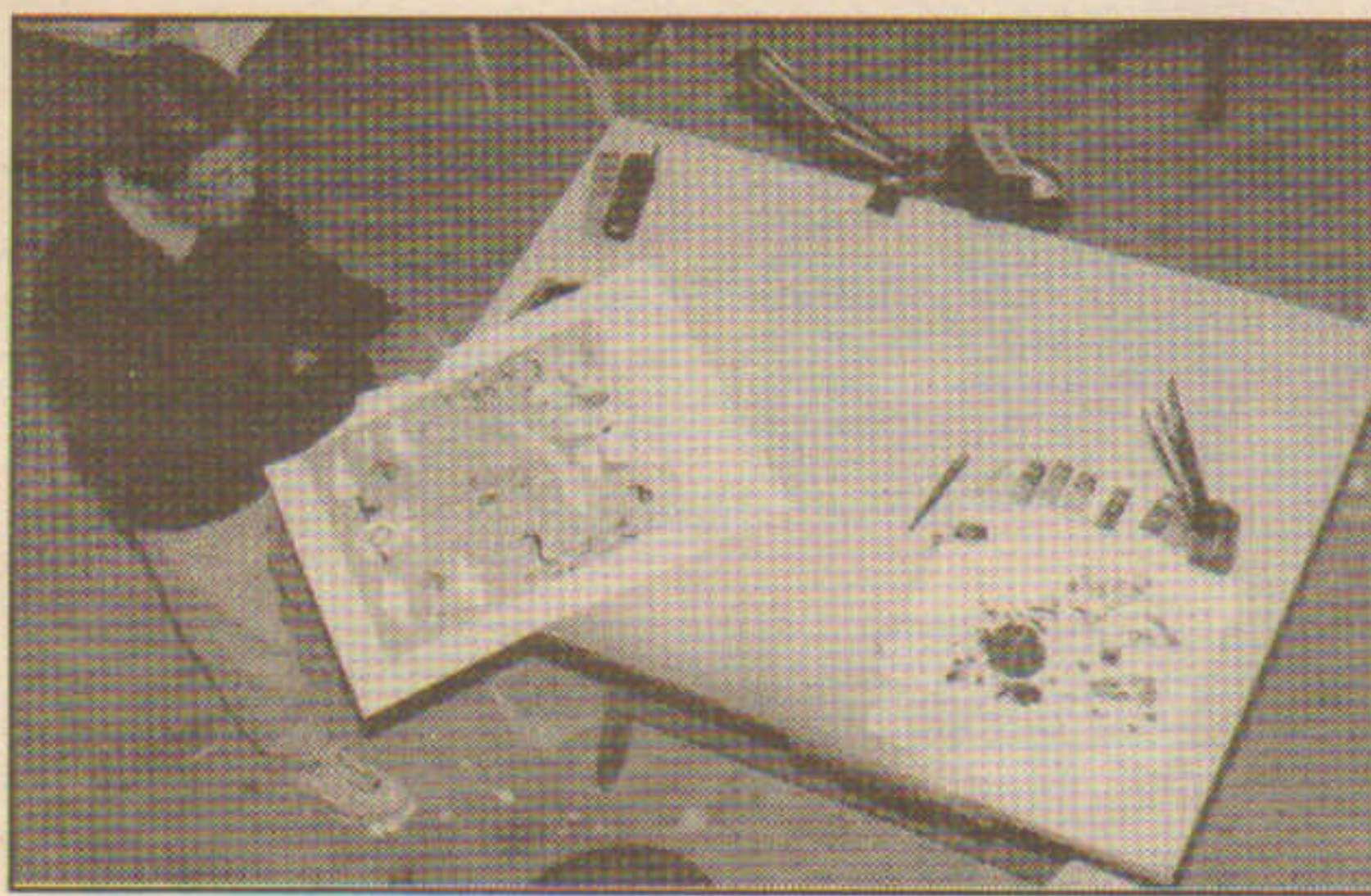
art created mainly by two of the communities actively represented at the festival, the Hmong and Mixteco. "What called my attention was the similarity of the imagery reflected in the folk art of these cultures. I noticed in the embroidery of both communities they

reflect natural forms. I also learned that the mercado for the two cultures is an equally important space of gathering," said Sierra during an interview at his studio, in Fresno.

The marketplace is a family place, a social space where people meet-and both cultures share similar elements such as fruit baskets. Sierra explains that nature and rural activities are always present in the artistic

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IMAGINATION

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expressions of these cultures. "I noticed that the artistic creation of these communities is very much ecologically oriented, they express natural things we need to appreciate, objects that sustain themselves," said Sierra. He pointed out that the art created by indigenous communities influenced great artists like Rufino Tamayo whose art is inspired by Mixteco culture. "In the Mixteco art, for instance, the marketplace, the use of colors, as well as the creation of animals is always present. This seems to be the case for the Hmong cultures, although Oaxaqueños go

beyond realism, they create fantastic animals, but this is the product of personal creativity that reflects the identity of a culture."

These are the elements John Sierra found as bringing these cultures together, something he expresses in the Tamejavi poster. He said that creating this poster was a different experience for him, but he would not mind doing it again because he identifies himself with these elements. In the imagery of these cultures he noticed the constant presence of the family situations, women and men, the old and young together. That is why he incorporated a family scene. This is very close to his belief in the importance of family unity. From his Hmong students who are taking Mexican art classes at Roosevelt High School, where Sierra teaches, he has learned Hmong share the same values of family unity.

"The Tamejavi poster is about a reality of the Valley," said Sierra. He enjoys being part of the Festival because it reflects his beliefs of valuing the best of what each group is

bringing to the Valley. "It may sound idealistic but we have to try. People need to learn about each other—this is very important and I believe this is what the festival is about."

Sierra explains that the Tamejavi Festival is an important event for the Valley. "To bring people together and to learn from each other through artistic expressions is a great idea," said Sierra.



John Sierra was born in Biola, a small town outside Fresno. He attended a Catholic school where there weren't any art classes. In the Service he worked as graphic artist, and then he attended college. He also painted the mural at the State Building in Fresno and was a founding member of Centro de Bellas Artes of Fresno and later he was active at Arte Americas.

John Sierra will sign posters during the opening of the Tamejavi Festival, Friday, April 26, 6:00 PM at the Tower Theater. You can also take part of Sierra's art to your home by purchasing a T-shirt and posters with Tamejavi's artwork and help with the fundraising efforts.

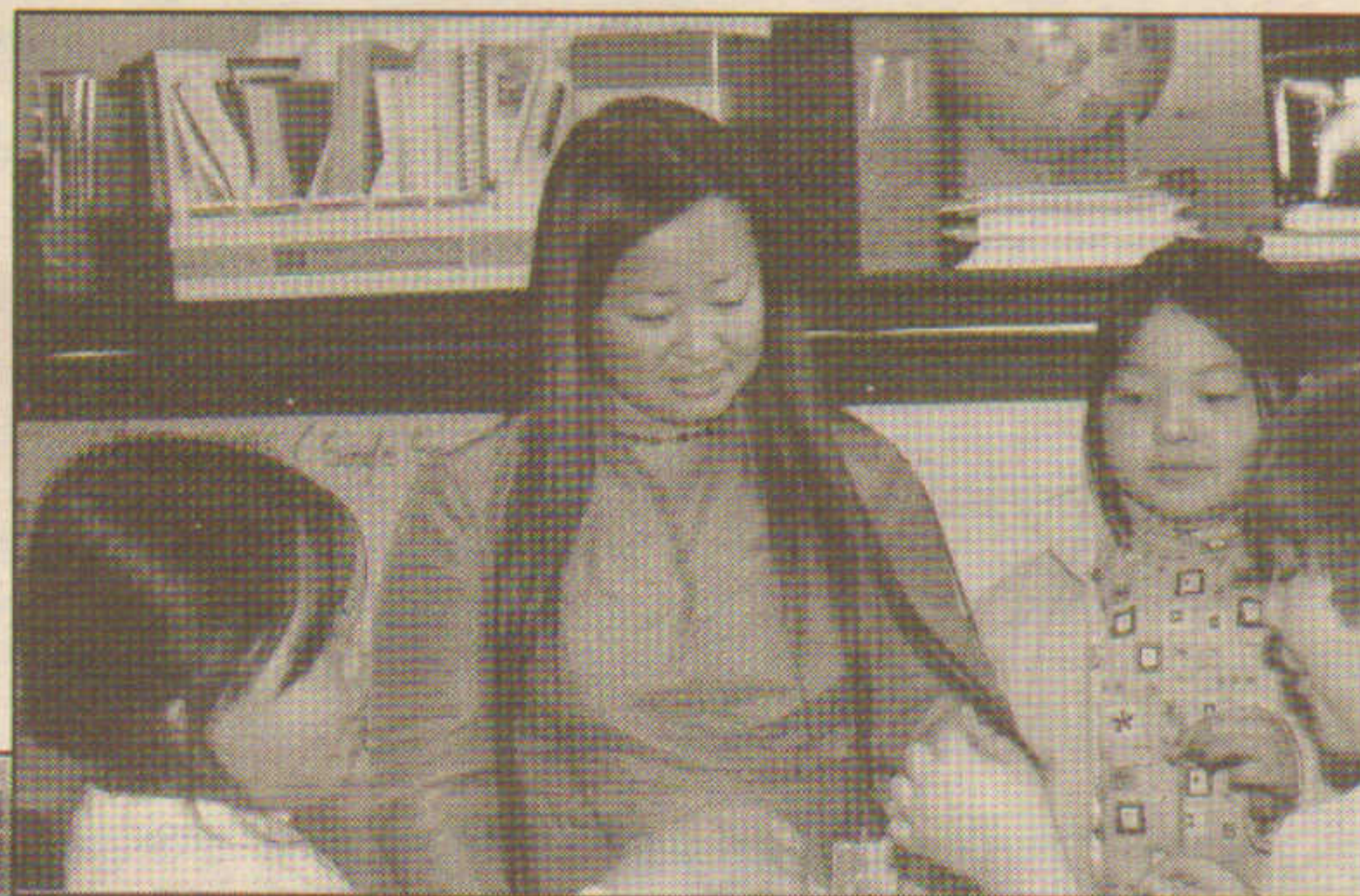
EDUCATION, A PATH TO FREEDOM

By Eduardo Stanley

Mai Vue was a little girl when her family started a long trip through the Laotian jungle to escape from war in the mid seventies. It took them around three years to arrive to the Mekong river—and from there they crossed to Thailand where the Vue family stayed at a refugee camp for almost three years. There Mai attended school, following her friends.

After arriving to U.S.A., she enrolled in school. Her first day at school was a scary one. She felt unsafe, strange. "I think this country wasn't prepared to receive students like me," said Mai. "My experience throughout elementary and high school was negative, I felt a lot of discrimination." However she remembers some of the positive things of those first days. "I learnt how to use the scissors and cut pictures," said Mai with a nostalgic voice. "My first words in English were thank you' and please" She also remembers her first friend, Martha, a Mexican girl with whom she performed plays and shared fresh tortillas at Martha's house.

At 14 years old, following a strong Hmong tradition, Mai got married and moved to her husband's family home. She was 15 years old when her first child Andrew was born. At 16, her second child, Andrea, was born. During her first pregnancy she dropped out of school. Mai explains that her husband's family expected her to be a housewife, have many children and look after her husband. "My husband was very possessive, I had no friends, no life," said Mai. "I felt bad, worthless and I went through abuses."



She realized that education was her passport to a better life and to freedom from what she describes as an oppressive experience. "I needed to go back to school, no school means I would be a prisoner all my life," said Mai. "I was living as a pretender, I need to get out." As she refused to drop out during her second pregnancy, her parent in-law didn't help her to attend school, refusing to drive her to school. So Mai walked every day several miles.

She was then attending McLane High School in Fresno. And one day, five-months pregnant and overwhelmed by pressure, Mai broke down. She started crying at the school's stairs. "I was tormented by my family, my schoolmates made fun of me ... I felt ashamed of myself," said Mai almost whispering. "And then something hap-

pened, my English teacher, Audrie Gendron, saw me crying, she took me with her and started talking to me, I slowly calmed down."

Mai describes in details the support her teacher gave her. After her second child was born, Mai had lunch with Mrs. Gendron everyday. Her teacher helped her with daycare and baby-sitting and most importantly, she gave Mai confidence and help her to build her self stem. Mai finally graduated from High School in Stockton.

She decided to be a teacher. She wanted to educate other girls about not marrying so young, staying in school, and working for a better life. After graduating from California State University-Fresno, Mai Vue teaches at Greenberg Elementary School in Fresno. Now divorced, she is devoted to her two children and to her students. "I grow to love this profession more and more every year," said Mai. "We teach more than math and English, we teach the students principles, honor, respect, care."

Mai has a dream: to be an author. She would love to write children books. And she also dreams of a better future where women are treated equally. "I am very compassionate toward women because my mother is a wonderful woman." So is Mai.

MUSIC FROM THE FIELDS

By
Myrna Martinez Nateras

When Salvador Bautista was a 12 year old boy in his hometown of San Miguel Cuevas, Oaxaca, Mexico, he liked music. It was then when the director of the local band invited him to play the *Caja*—a percussion instrument. A little bit later, the band played for Luis



Echeverria, then president of Mexico, during an official visit to Huxtlahuaca, Oaxaca. After the performance, the president approached Salvador and offered him \$100 pesos. "I refused because I didn't know the meaning of money," said Salvador with a smile. "I finally accepted after the director of the band asked me to do so."

Today Salvador directs an 18 member band that plays the original tunes of the Mixteco music. The most popular is the *Chilena*, a traditional tune from the Mixteco music played at important family celebrations such as weddings. Salvador is also involved in the "El Chareo" dance and music that resembles an opera with dancers performing in handmade costumes representing a fight among religions. The original representation lasts five days. Salvador explains that in the U.S. it is difficult to represent the full version of the "El Chareo." In March 2002, they presented a short version for the

first time in the Valley during the Mid-Year celebrations.

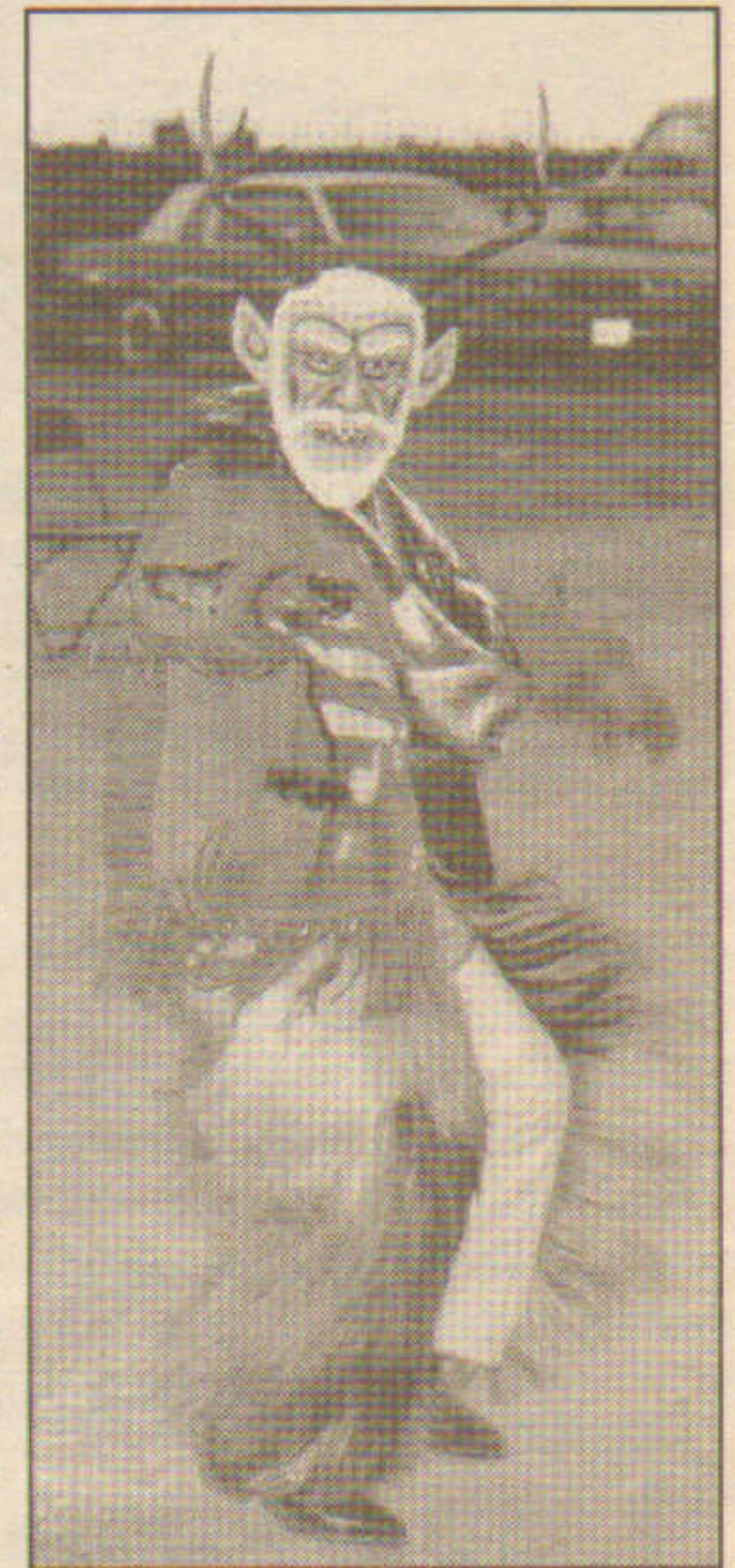
It took Salvador several years and lot of sacrifices to create the band. As a farm worker, he emigrated from Oaxaca to Sinaloa, Sonora and Baja California states looking for jobs. It was during one of these trips that something happened: he found a trumpet on a trash can. He picked it up and started playing. When he immigrated to the U.S. in 1992, he was carrying his trumpet.

Since his arrival to America, Salvador was looking for other Mixtecos interested in music. He finally assembled a group of musicians and played to the public for the first time in 2001 during the Benito Juarez tournament organized by the Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional in Madera. After their performance, people approached Salvador asking him for his business card and estimates to play for weddings, baptisms and other family events.

He didn't have a business card. And the band didn't have a name. So they opened up the discussion about the band's name. And they named themselves "Hoz de Cuevas" (Cuevas' Sickle) because of a cave located on his hometown San Miguel Cuevas that resembles a sickle. Also, Cuevas means cave.

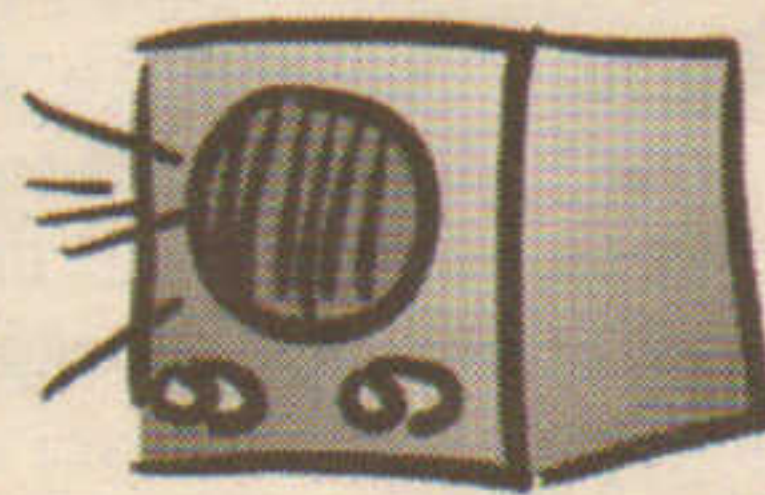
Currently the band plays all around the Valley at different events, both public and private charging a fee that they save for improving their community. "We are all Mixtecos, we work in the fields and we don't have formal education," said Salvador. "With our little money we helped to build a school and a health clinic in our hometown." He also said that he would like to help young people to study music.

"We are very proud of our culture and we are happy to play at the Tamejavi Festival," said Salvador. "It's beautiful to share our music with other people and to listen to other music as well." Hoz de Cuevas plays during the Tamejavi Festival on Saturday, April 27, at 4:30 PM at the Outdoor Marketplace.



NUESTRO FORO

El Programa radial
en Español
para Nuestra Gente!



Miércoles de 7:00 a 8:00 PM
por KFCF - 88.1 FM

Inmigración, Participación Cívica, Religión, Desarrollo Social,
Economía, Salud ... Y todos los temas que le interesan!

Auspiciado por New California Media
y el Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional



The American Friends
Service Committee

*Advocacy, organizing,
and development*

Communities speaking
in their own voices
about the decisions
that affect them

ACTING AS A WAY OF LIFE

Tamejavi News Bureau



As part of the Tamejavi Festival, members of the organizing committee invited Argentina's maestro Ernesto Torchia to offer an acting class in Spanish for the growing movement of Teatro en Español that the Valley has been witnessing in the last five years. A small but enthusiastic group of students participates every night in a three hour class at the Catholic Charities building in downtown Fresno.

"I come from a very different country and I feel very comfortable with this group," said Ernesto Torchia. "I feel that I can display with them what I planned to do, which is to put in motion a strategy for forming actors and to suggest guidelines for the pedagogy, the aesthetics and the ethic of dramatic art." Torchia is a graduate from the National University of La Plata, Argentina, and has an impressive background in acting, directing and teaching theater.

He wants to bring to the Valley the actor training techniques of Stanilavsky, Brecht and Fessler, enriched with his personal teaching experience and techniques. "These people are making a big effort to do theater in the Valley," said Torchia. "However I have the impression that the efforts are being made informally and separately. I would advise these groups get together and join forces to create an actors cooperative, write proposals and plant the

seeds for a more permanent movement with the goal of providing a systematic training for the formation of actors."

Torchia also explains that acting is not just for professionals but for those who enjoy acting and the arts. "Acting provides people with additional skills and techniques, such as handling your inhibitions, developing expressive possibilities, an overall body well-being. In general theater provides a more ample perspective of daily life," said Torchia, a quite and well-mannered actor, director and teacher who likes to talk about acting as a way of life and the emotional benefits of the arts.



Torchia mentioned how excited he feels about getting involved in the

Tamejavi Festival because it will provide an opportunity for different communities to express themselves, to communicate each other and learn values that promote the common good. "People have more commonalities than we tend to believe, we have to move forward toward a society of brotherhood and not of competition," said Torchia. "I reject competition and strongly believe in the common good of our society."

Maestro Ernesto Torchia will facilitate a workshop on Saturday, April 27, starting at 2:00 PM at the Second Space Theater, 928 E. Olive Ave. The theater class will improvise sketches from ideas suggested by the audience on Sunday, April 28, starting at 7:00 PM at the Tower Theater at Wishon and Olive Ave.

Torchia's classes have had a great impact on his students. One of them described the workshop as a extraordinary learning experience. "It's great to have a professional teacher who comes here to help the movement of Teatro en Español," said Cristina LeClere, an enthusiastic local young actress who already performed in several plays in the Valley. "This workshop is helping me a lot in my development as an actress and I appreciate the Tamejavi organizers

WHAT IS NUEVO CANTO/NEW SONG?

By Patricia Solorzano

The term 'Nuevo Canto' was coined in the 60's, a decade of many social upheavals in the United States and Latin America in general. Much like the corridos in Mexico and the legends & folklore of the world, a nuevo canto song carried the history and voice of a community, however the song forms were expanded, blended and stylized to include all the contemporary influences of the continental Americas: jazz, african rooted rhythms, indigenous rhythms, pop, rock...and so on.

Violeta Parra, a 20th Century Chilean poet/singer/songwriter of international renown, is considered the 'Mother of Nuevo Canto'. Violeta took it upon herself to research the music of the 'pueblo', she traveled to every corner of her beloved Chile to study the folklore of the indigenous tribes and communities. Through the years of witnessing and experiencing the political and social strife affecting the country, she began to develop strong anti-government opinions about the reality that Chilenos were living. Violeta became the first composer (that reached international audiences) to utilize indigenous song forms that carried lyrics with social commentary.

developing "new" expressions. Nuevo Canto now encompasses world music song forms, as well as the traditional styles and rhythms of Latin American Folklore. The New Song now includes music of struggle that is used in public manifestations and demonstrations, for everyone to sing, to songs of beautiful poetry encouraging us to think and analyze...to songs of love.

Fresno is a community of immigrants from all over the world who have come here willingly and some not-so willingly. It is important that we do not forget who we are and where we come from, it rests on our shoulders to be the 'keepers' of our heritage, it is our duty. For this reason and many others, instructor/musical director Patricia Wells Solórzano (of musical group Agustín Lira & "Alma") decided to begin a 'teaching Rondalla' (all-acoustic ensemble of voices & guitars). The Rondalla was formed to teach vocal harmony & ensemble playing and to serve as a resource for students of Latin American Folklore and Nuevo Canto, the group uses songs to study different rhythms and styles...and to develop better musical skills. The Rondalla members are: Eduwijos Jalomo, Maria Elena Garcia, Margaret Delgado, Miguel Mejia, Santiago Gomez, Maricela Hurtado and Gwen Huff.

The public is invited to take classes in music, free of charge, at the Center for Non-Violence, 985 Van Ness Ave. every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. (559) 237-3016. Sponsored by the California Arts Council, Teatro de la Tierra and the Center for Non-Violence.

The Rondalla Nuevo Mundo—Latin American Folklore & Nuevo Canto/New Song—will perform Saturday April 27th, 2002 at 2:30 p.m. at the outdoor marketplace. Merlinda Espinosa, Fresno's own young Diva singing Ballads, Boleros, Pop, Rock...and more! will follow Saturday, April 27th, 2002 at 3:00 p.m.

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This was a beginning, the idea spread throughout the Americas, to the ears of songwriters who were ready to embark on

See you at the Movies!

Immigrant Film Series at the Tower Theater

As a part of the First Annual Tamejavi Festival four films about various immigrant communities and their social, economic and political struggles will view at Fresno's Tower Theater on Sunday April 28th starting at 12:30 PM.

• Echando Raíces/Taking Root

Directed by J.T. Takagi/Produced by The American Friends Service Committee, tells the stories of immigrant communities and their struggle for human rights. Stories and reflections of refugees and immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Cambodia and Laos are combined with scenes of community life and struggle.

• Split Horn: Life of a Hmong Shaman in America

Directed by Taggart Siegel/Produced by Jim McSilver, T. Siegel will also show at the Tower Theater on the 28th. Director Taggart Siegel spent 17 years chronicling the life of Paja Thao and his family from the mountains of Laos to the heartland of American. This poignant film shows a

shaman's struggles to maintain his ancient traditions as his children embrace American culture.

• Blossoms of Fire

Directed/Produced by Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne presents a dazzling, whirling dance of a film that celebrates the extraordinary lives of the Istmus Zapotec women of southern Oaxaca, Mexico. The strong work ethic and fierce independent streak of the Istmus women is rooted in their culture and has greatly contributed to the region's progressive politics and unusual tolerance of alternative gender roles.

• Bread and Roses

This final film in the series at the Tower on April 28th is presented/sponsored by Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (CAFÉ).

Directed by Ken Loach. From acclaimed director Ken Loach comes the gripping story of a group of immigrant work-



"Blossom of Fire," courtesy of Maureen Gosling

ers who take a stand against the million dollar corporations who employ them. Newly arrived illegal immigrant Maya (Pilar Padilla) has just joined her sister on the job as a janitor in a downtown LA office building. Appalled at the work conditions and unfair labor practices, she teams up with Sam (Adrian Brody), a labor organizer, to fight their ruthless employer.

MI SANGRE MIXTECA

Un poema de Jorge San Juan

Que mi voz retumbe en el viento
y que mi sangre se riegue en los mares
así podré expresar lo que siento
así podré expresar mis pesares
sólo el viento llevará mi pensamiento
y las aguas mis grandes malestares.

Nací en la tierra Mixteca
y fuí arrullado con el canto de las aves
mis sueños lo velaron las estrellas
mientras dormía debajo de un sarape
y tuve el calor más lindo
el calor de los brazos de mi madre

Afortunado soy por ser Mixteco
y de llevar la pureza en la sangre
no hay riqueza que me compre
ni lujo que me cambie
a todos digo soy Mixteco
así me lo enseñó mi padre

Me encuentro entre tanta gente
que disimulan amor y paz
la verdad odian mi sangre
hasta mi manera de hablar
se creen dueños de todo
hasta mi propia libertad

Odiar no me enseñaron
sólo ofrecer amor
si me critican diré lo siento
aunque me destroce de dolor
siempre tendrán mi mano
con cariño y con fervor

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTICIERO SEMANAL newspaper
RADIO UNICA 940 - AM
NEWS EN ESPAÑOL newspaper
NUESTRO FORO, 88.1 - FM (Wednesdays 7:00 PM)
THE FRESNO BEE
EL GRAFICO newspaper
RADIO GRITO, 900 - AM (Fridays 1:00 PM)
KNXT-TV 49
FRESNO CITY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Dr. SUDARSHAN KAPOOR
KFTV-Channel 21, Univision
ERNIE VELASQUEZ, Executive Director, Catholic Charities
CHICANO LATINO STUDIES, CSUF
THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION

Echando Raíces/Taking Root The Video

Bring the voice of immigrants and non immigrants into the classroom with Echando Raices / Taking Root. This video documentary is ideal for classroom discussions of such topics as:

- Immigration and immigrants rights
- Racial and ethnic relations
- Globalization and economic restructuring
- Civil and human rights
- Ethnic studies
- Urban studies
- Peace studies

Discussion guide includes background information on immigration policy issues, immigration and race, profile of the U.S. immigrant population, facilitation notes, resource listings, and more.

To purchase this important video and documentation, please call American Friends Service Committee at (215) 241-7126. Available in English and Spanish. Special rates for grassroots organizations.

RADIO GRITO La Voz del Pueblo

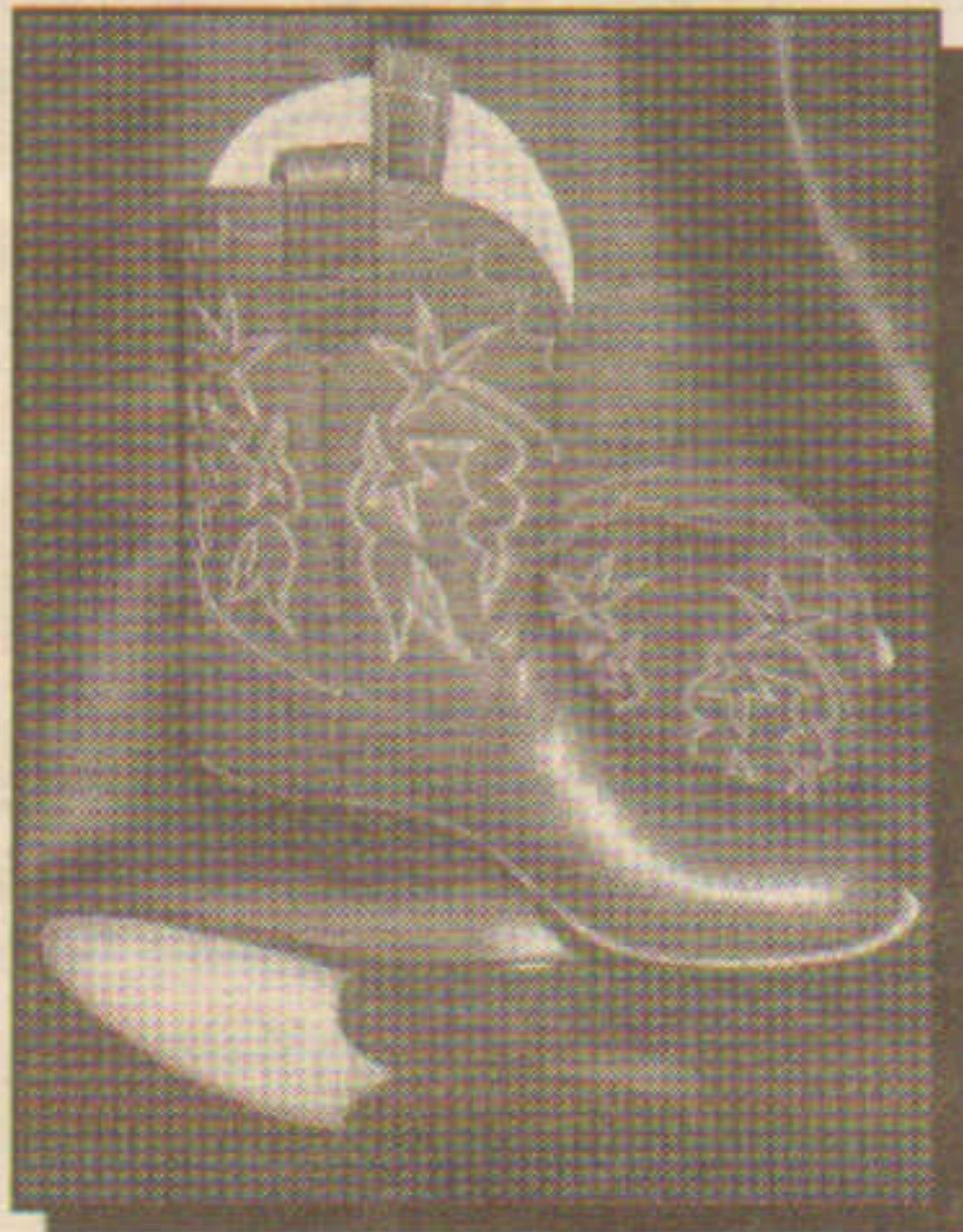
VIERNES 1:00 PM - por 900 AM

Información de Salud, Vivienda, Educación, Problemas laborales y de Naturalización, y un poco de música para alegrar el corazón!

Participe!:(559) 734-7486 ó 1 (800) 984-7486

Win a Pair of Custom-Made Cowboy Boots At Tamejavi Festival Raffle!!!

The Fresno Arts Council's Folk Arts Program and the Alliance for California Traditional Arts are donating a pair of cowboy boots by Fresno's master boot maker Luis Jovel to benefit the Tamejavi Festival. The boots will be raffled off, with all proceeds going to the festival.



Master boot maker Luis Jovel began making shoes in his father's shoe shop in El Salvador at the age of 13. Since coming to the United States in 1982, he has concentrated on making cowboy boots for farmers, ranchers, and rodeo cowboys. He made a special pair for Vicente Fox, the President of Mexico. Each customer decides the use for the boots—dress-up, everyday wear, or work—and then Jovel determines the type of sole, heel, welt, leather, and steel shank he will use. "I want the customer to feel that what they are getting comes from an artist, not just a boot maker. I always give my best." And Jovel's ultimate goal is to create the perfect fit with his beautiful boots.

Raffle tickets are \$1.00 each, or 6 for \$5.00, and will be on sale all day Saturday during the Tamejavi Festival at the Fresno Arts Council's table in the Mercado. **The drawing will be Saturday evening at 7pm. at the Tower Theater.** The winner need not be present to win—the Fresno Arts Council will call the winner to arrange the fitting with Jovel. For more information, call Debbie Fant at the Fresno Arts Council (237.9816) or Amy Kitchener at the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (237-9813).

The Fresno Bee
Central California's Leading Newspaper
fresnoBee.com

**The Fresno Bee and FresnoBee.com
salute The Pan Valley Institute
of the American Friends Service Committee
for their sponsorship
of the TAMEJAVI Festival for their efforts
to build our community
through cultural exchange.**



THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION

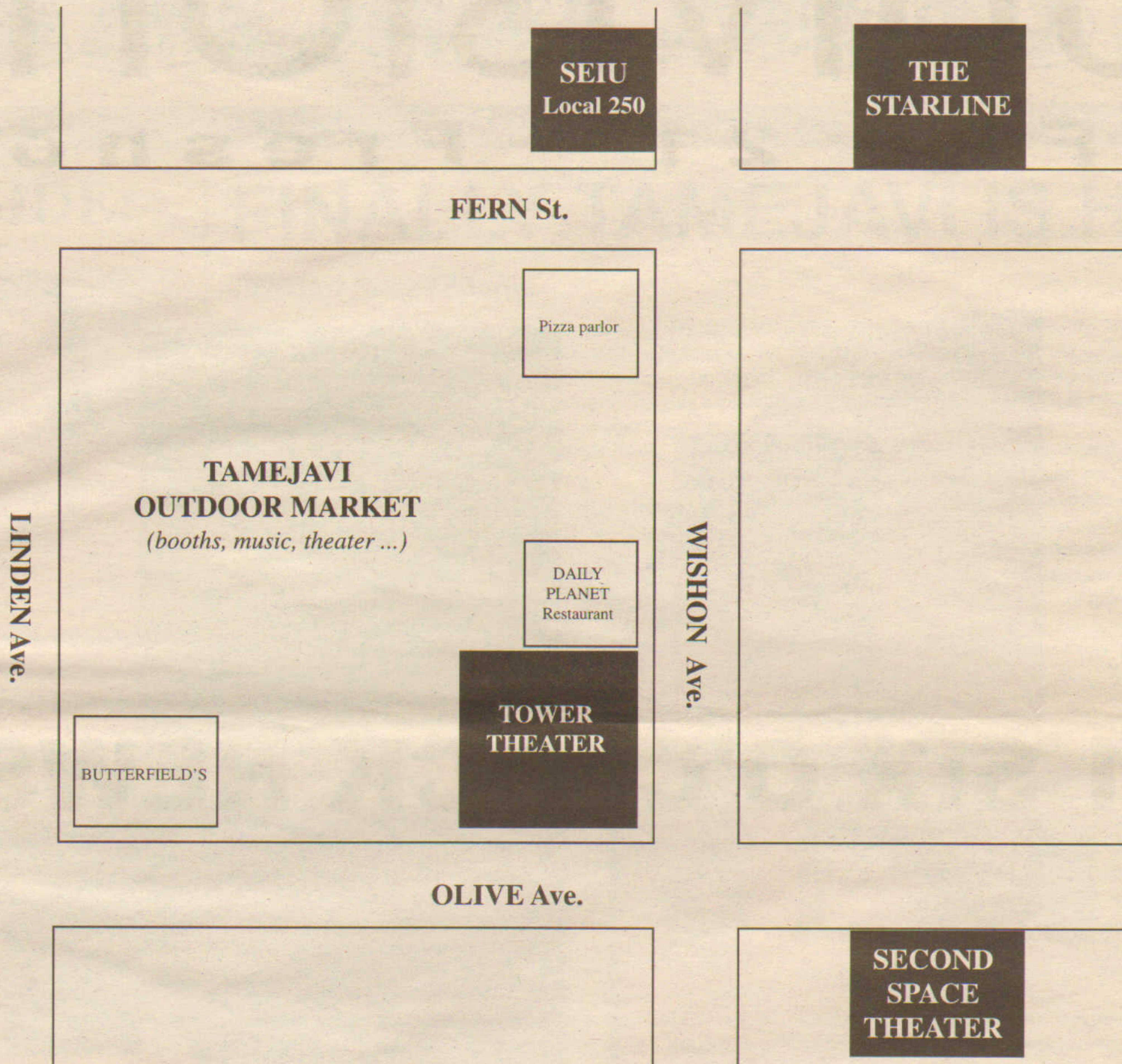
Partners in Building a Better California

The Civic Culture Program
The Arts Program

Salute the Tamejavi Festival

TAMEJAVI MAP

Black boxes indicates buildings where Tamejavi indoor activities will take place



WHAT IS LA PEÑA CAFE?

By Matilde Hicks

This past February 1st, La Peña Café, the diverse monthly gathering of Latin American performers and community members, celebrated its one-year anniversary. "Peña" means a huge rock, like a boulder. It is a place where people can go and ground themselves in their culture. La Peña-styled celebrations began in South América more than thirty years ago and spread throughout Latin América. It is in Arte Américas and under the direction of Matilde Hicks, that la Peña has been able to reaffirm its roots.

La Peña Café in Arte Americas, whose purpose is to promote and celebrate the Latino culture and its artists in the Valley and to help develop local talents through music, poetry, dance and good humor, meets the first Friday of every month. Performances by the featured musicians, dancers and/or poets are always followed by an open microphone session, where anyone can share their talent. La Peña Café is free to the public. Beverages are for sale. For further information, call (559) 266-2623 or 1-800-232-7031

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts & The Fresno Arts Council

Congratulates all the folk & traditional artists participating in the inaugural TAMEJAVI Festival for pursuing the traditional art they do, sharing it publicly, and working toward passing it on, through thick and thin.

We hope that we can be of service to you now and in the future.



Alliance for California Traditional Arts