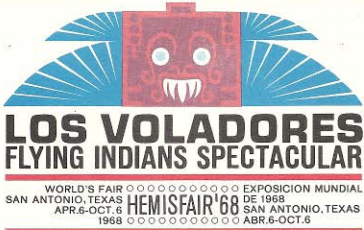


Joe Block
12 E 46 St,
New York City
212-697-2765
Ernie Broggi
535 S Main,
San Antonio
512-226-0123
HemisFair '68
Press Center
512-225-2011



BACKGROUND INFORMATION/RELEASE AT WILL

FACT SHEET: LOS VOLADORES FLYING INDIANS SPECTACULAR

WHAT'S HAPPENING: The entertainment event of HemisFair '68 -- the international exposition saluting "The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas". A spectacular performance of daring and skill -- in a colorful re-creation of a 400-year-old Aztec ritual.

WHERE: Pepsi-Cola/Frito-Lay Pavilion, HemisFair '68. Located between the Arena and the Tower of the Americas adjacent to the waterway.

Sponsored by Frito-Lay, Inc. and Pepsi-Cola Co.

WHEN: Four free shows daily on weekdays and five daily on weekends for the run of HemisFair '68 -- April 6-October 6, 1968.

PERSONNEL: 22 members of the Totonac Indian tribe, Papantla, district of Vera Cruz, Mexico.

Chief: Jose Villanueva de la Cruz
 Flyers: Roman Perez de la Cruz
 Jaime Garcia Hernandez
 Venancio Vicente Ramirez
 Mario Luna Santiago

Producer: Carlos Ochoa, Acapulco, Mexico
 Costumes: Julio Angel Miranda, Acapulco, Mexico
 Architect: Cerf Stanford Ross, Dallas, Texas

--more--



HemisFair '68/PepsiCo -- Flying Indians Fact Sheet -- 2.

PERFORMANCE:

The spectacular dance of the Flying Indians is actually a summoning of the benevolent rain gods -- called to the service of their people just as they were when Mexico and the American Southwest were first seen by European eyes.

Seeking the gift of the gods, four Los Voladores ascend to the heavens -- up a 114-foot pole -- then lunge into space and "fly" to the ground, by making 32 revolutions around the vertical pole, secured only by a waist-held rope. As each rope unwinds -- 104 feet for each flyer -- the celebrating Indians whirl further and further into space, ultimately fanning out to a radius of thirty feet before reaching the ground and safety. At the top of the pole, the hereditary chief performs the rain dance on a twenty-inch disk -- accompanying himself on a primitive reed flute and skin drum. While the four flyers are returning to the ground, the chief remains on top of the pole. At the conclusion of the flight, he does a slide-for-life down pole-length rope. During the central part of the flying ritual, two quartets of Totonac Hua-Huas (Wah-Wahs) form human pinwheels -- self-propelling themselves around crossbar-rigged standards to attract the attention of the gods to the people's need for rain. The entire ritual is introduced by a traditional sacrificial procession -- in which a maiden princess of the tribe is dedicated to the service of the gods.

During the course of the performance, an elaborate water-and-light show is enacted at the base of the pole, simulating the torchlight pyrotechnics that accompany the rituals performed in Papantla.

SAFETY:

No nets or other modern safety measures are used in the course of the performance. Except for the waist-tied ropes -- which are rigged for guidance purposes -- Los Voladores are completely "free-flying".

Despite the high winds that are common at the top of the pole -- particularly in Acapulco, where Los Voladores normally perform -- and the added turbulence created by the descent of the flyers, the chief remains on the tiny, twenty-inch pole-top disk with absolutely no safety precautions of any kind. The rope via which he returns to the ground is attached to the pole at the top -- and held on the ground by the fliers themselves.

HemisFair '68/PepsiCo -- Flying Indians Fact Sheet -- 3.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: The traditional performance presented at HemisFair '68 has been developed from Totonac rites by Carlos Ochoa. In addition to managing all the modern affairs of the Totonac Indians -- the tribe speaks no English or modern Spanish, communicating only in a unique tribal dialect -- Sr. Ochoa is active in contemporary entertainment affairs. A former water-skier with international championship credits, he owns and operates Acapulco's famous Club de Ski, site of spectacular water-skiing activity. He introduced the Totonacs to the modern entertainment arena in 1960 -- after living with the tribe for three months before successfully persuading them to dance before an international public.

The Flying Indians ritual, as seen at HemisFair '68, is a long-running entertainment attraction in Acapulco -- at the Casablanca Hotel. There, the Indians perform under spotlights atop the roof garden, which overlooks the bay from the highest point in the area.

TRIBAL HISTORY: The Totonacs have been settled in Papantla -- where some 13,000 tribe members still live -- for more than 400 years. Their rain dance ritual evolved early in their history -- when the Indians considered that a balanced climate resulted from the marriage between the male fire-god of the earth and the female water-god of the sky. The dance, itself, is directed toward Tlaloc, the Aztec rain god whose benevolence was vital to an agricultural people. Three elements play a part in the Hemisfair '68 ritual: Tlaloc in the person of a monumental image; the male principle in the ceremonial fire urns; the female principle in the water fountains around the base of the pole. The dance continues, today, in ritual use in Papantla.

The males of the tribe compete as children for the privilege of training for a flyer's role. While the chiefdom is hereditary -- to the extent that only males from selected families are considered -- any Totonac has an opportunity to achieve the tribe's highest honor by qualifying to appear in the troupe.

COSTUMES: The Totonac costumes represent eagles and other birds familiar in the Vera Cruz area. Flyers wear a bird headpiece with a brown body costume and colorful tribal waist bands. Feathers are worn as symbolic shoulder, waist and ankle decorations.

HemisFair '68/PepsiCo -- Flying Indians Fact Sheet -- 4.

COSTUMES:
(continued)

The chief's white and red costume is topped by an ancient headdress made of colorful stones.

The pinwheeling Hua-Huas wear red pantaloons, white blouses and colorful shoulder sashes. Each Hua-Hua wears a headdress consisting of a multi-colored eighteen-inch disk set in a tight-fitting skull cap.

The maiden princess -- bare-breasted in the Aztec manner, reflecting the sacrificial origins of the rite -- appears costumed in a skirt made of panels dyed in pre-Christian patterns. Her headdresses and cape are feathered -- in line with the overriding bird symbolism.

All of the costumes were adapted from their authentic tribal origins by Julio Angel Miranda -- who is well-known in Mexico as a researcher and museum consultant specializing in tribal design traditions.

TECHNICAL:

The 114-foot tubular pole used by Los Voladores at HemisFair is made of steel -- instead of the traditional tree that is still familiar in Papantla.

The modern pole -- measuring 21 inches at the base and four inches at the top -- is built in seven sections and welded together. Total weight is 4 1/2 tons. For support, the pole is set in a concrete foundation 36 feet deep and three feet in diameter. The twenty-inch chief's platform at the top of the pole is made of hardwood.

The dedication at San Antonio -- prior to the opening of HemisFair '68 -- was marked by a sacrificial rite at which the pole was dedicated to the flyers, and the people, just as the tallest tree in the forest was dedicated in ancient times.

The entire Frito-Lay/Pepsi-Cola Pavilion has been designed by architect Cerf Stanford Ross, Dallas, Texas, to reflect the themes and motifs of ancient Mexico. Design origins are the Aztec temples and ruins still visible in the Vera Cruz area.