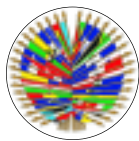


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FROM THE EDITOR

As Haitians struggle to rebuild their lives after the devastating January 12 earthquake, representatives of the Inter-American System are forging strategies to aid in the reconstruction of the hemisphere's poorest country.

Américas joins in solidarity with the people of Haiti by asking our readers to give generously to the Pan-American Development Foundation (PADF), the OAS response mechanism for emergencies and natural disasters. In upcoming issues, we will continue to bring you stories of Haiti's challenges and the progress being made there.

This issue initiates two significant anniversaries in the hemisphere. One is the centennial of the House of the Americas, the Washington headquarters of the OAS and a symbol of inter-American unity. The other commemoration is just beginning. Two centuries ago, sixteen Latin American nations from Mexico to Argentina began their struggles for independence from Spain. This issue contains the first installment of history from that fourteen-year period.

And while the passage of time is sometimes met with ritual and celebration, at other times it is noted only with subtle signs, or objects found under layers of sand in remote deserts. Images of cemeteries in the Norte Grande of Chile are a testament to a vivid past now long forgotten.



page 36

And speaking of ancestral art forms, two visionary North American artists are helping recover the ancient art of fine book-making among the descendants of the Maya in Guatemala. There, near the colonial town of Antigua, Kachiquel artisans are once again becoming "people of the book."

Finally, this issue also recognizes some of our hemisphere's great writers, artists, and musicians, with stories on: José Donoso's recently released diaries; the controversial and charismatic Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral; and the cultural messages woven into the work of pianist and composer Gabriela Frank.

Cover: *The hamlet of Piene, Chile, was once the way station for merchants transporting salt through the Andes during pre-colonial and colonial times*

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page 50

AMÉRICAS

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VOLUME 62, NUMBER 2

FEATURES

6 **DIVERS OF THE DEEP**
Text and photographs by Neilan M. Kuntz
With limited marine resources, the Ngöbe-Buglé in the Bocas del Toro Archipelago of Panama face many challenges

12 **WARS OF INDEPENDENCE: SOUTH AMERICA**
by David Bushnell ♦ Introduction by James Patrick Kiernan
Through the crucible of conflict, independent republics emerged and were reborn from the geographic confines of Spain's American colonies

20 **CELEBRATIONS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE**
Text and photographs by Alejandro Balaguer
In a balance between customs and conservation, practices are changing in Panama and Bolivia to minimize the use of wild bird feathers in festival costumes

28 **LOST IN THE SAND**
Text and photographs by Ricardo Carrasco Stuparich
Cemeteries throughout northern Chile resonate as silent monuments to the past

36 **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK**
with Catherine Docter ♦ Photographs by John Edward Heaton
A printing press in Guatemala has revived the ancient craft of fine art bookmaking

44 **LIVING DANGEROUSLY**
Text and photographs by Victor Englebert
A transport mode from a by-gone era continues to thrill in rural Colombia



DEPARTMENTS

2 **UPFRONT**

3 **OJO**

50 **OAS**

52 **INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**

54 **ART**

60 **MUSIC**

62 **LITERATURE**

64 **LATITUDES**



page 20



page 6

page 44