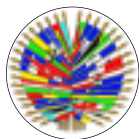


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F R O M T H E E D I T O R

Happy New Year to all our readers! In 2010, *Américas* will continue to cover the incredible diversity of our continent and explore the wealth of personalities and events that bring flavor to our daily lives.

One particularity of 2010 is that the OAS has declared it the Inter-American Year of Women. In celebration, this issue presents some inspiring examples of the growing leadership of women in all walks of life.

You may have also heard that the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games are about to take place in Canada. As athletes from all over the world prepare to head to Vancouver and Whistler, *Américas* gives you a taste of the growing anticipation not only in the powerhouse camp of Canada but also among the dark horse contenders of Latin America. The Olympics should inspire all American youth to engage in competitive play.

From the icy rinks of British Colombia we travel through space and time to Puerto Rico, the Island of Enchantment, captured through the soulful lenses of the great photographers of the 1940s. From there, we head to the Caribbean community of Santa Marta, the oldest city of Colombia and a place full of spectacular scenery, history, and culture. The final stop in South America is at la Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino, the place where liberator Simón Bolívar drew his last breath.

We leave the sunny coast behind and enter the dark and mysterious caves of Mexico that are home to legions of bats. *Américas* has joined the campaign to debunk the myth that these “flying mice” are harmful blood suckers. In fact, study after study show how bats contribute to the environment and keep insect populations under control.

Then we realize it’s time to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the 1609 publication of the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* by El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. This unique book was the first ever written and published by a *mestizo* and remains one of the most important books on Peruvian history.

Fast forward to the 20th century, and we look at an author of a different kind. Do our readers know the true identity of adventure writer B. Traven? This issue provides you with some clues, though it seems that no one really knows for sure. Another intriguing feature gives us a window into the turbulent world of contemporary Mexican artist Alejandro Colunga.



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Cover: Sugar cane worker near Ponce, Puerto Rico, by Farm Security Administration photographer Edwin Rosskam

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In this issue, *Américas* is also proud to present some of the many activities of the OAS, with a look at innovative drug treatment and rehabilitation partnerships with the European Commission; and projects to assist the demobilized and the displaced in Colombia through the combined efforts of the OAS, the Colombian government, and the private sector.

Welcome, once again, to a journey with *Américas* through the Americas, a place where discoveries and surprises never end.

AMÉRICAS

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