

OUR VOICE

For Voices of Mexico, our thirty-seventh issue is a celebration: our magazine first came out ten years ago, sponsored by the National University and edited by MariClaire Acosta, who remained with Voices until its sixteenth issue. In 1991, the responsibility for the magazine fell to the then-Center for Research on the United States (CISEUA), now the Center for Research on North America (CISAN). Ambassador Hugo B. Margáin edited the publication with great enthusiasm from issues 17 to 32. I came onto the staff of Voices as managing editor for issue 31 and since issue 33 have been its director, privileged to present some of Mexico's finest voices to our readership abroad.

It is of utmost importance to mention that Voices has just been awarded a grant from the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Cultures sponsored by Mexico's National Fund for Culture and the Arts, the Bancomer Cultural Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. The Fund's financial program is directed to support the development of high quality projects, capable of leading to solid cultural exchanges and close, lasting collaboration among artists, intellectuals and related cultural institutions of both countries.

Our contributors include some of the most outstanding academics of our university, the National University of Mexico, and other educational institutions. We have also invited government officials and members of all major political parties to contribute so our readers may see the growing plurality in Mexican society. We also enrich our magazine by showing the work of some of our best artists.

It is our firm belief that relations among countries must be based on understanding and negotiation and not on mutual ignorance and unilateral views. If Voices of Mexico plays at least a small part in improving mutual understanding in the region, we will have more than met our goal.

This issue contains a wide variety of materials we hope will be of interest to our readers. Something very important took place last August in Mexico: after many months of negotiations, Mexico's four main political parties signed the electoral reform. It was later unanimously approved by Congress, giving it even greater weight. The political players who participated were responding to the public's demand for more democracy and honesty in elections and showed their invaluable political willingness to come to basic agreements, even though they still maintain differences. Clearly, they were up to meeting the imperatives of our time, the public's demand that political matters be settled through persuasion and solid arguments and not through confrontation and lack of communication.

With such a significant event to cover, Voices of Mexico invited the main leaders of the political parties to briefly explain their viewpoints on the electoral reform, which is part of the political reform of the Mexican state. On this occasion, we asked them to explain what has been gained and what remains to be achieved regarding elections.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, the enormously uncertain global situation makes the international role and strategy of Mexico very relevant for our readers. This is why Voices of Mexico interviewed Foreign Minister José Angel Gurría, who explains his views in a penetrating analysis.

From the tendency to globalization, which unfortunately does not exclude organized crime, stems the need for supranational bodies for controversy resolution. Concluding our "Politics" section, Ricardo Franco Guzmán writes about the International Criminal Court, a body of just this kind.

In the section "Science, Art and Culture," the director of the Center for Research on North America, Mónica Vereá, writes

about the history of and current studies about the United States and North America in Mexico. She emphasizes the need for our three countries to continue this work in order to achieve better understanding in the framework of the consolidation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The state of Oaxaca becomes festive and colorful every July when it celebrates the Guelaguetza. Local costume, food, flowers and dances combine to offer the visitor a gift of beautiful customs with the majesty of colonial architecture, the ruins of Monte Albán and the natural beauty of the state of Oaxaca as a backdrop. Who better to explain the meaning of Guelaguetza festivities than one of Oaxaca's most widely recognized writers, Andrés Henestrosa?

Alfonso de María y Campos writes about Mexican food, explaining how Mexican cuisine has influenced the world's gastronomy, as well as the influences it has received from abroad and how it has acquired—to our delight—a national character.

Our university gained legal autonomy in 1929, with the aim of protecting academic freedom. From then on, the university has had an independent budget guaranteeing freedom in research, so it could be a plural institution. This is the topic dealt with by Fernando Serrano Migallón, formerly the head of the UNAM's legal department. The "Society" section continues with an article by the current Coordinator of Humanities of the UNAM, Humberto Muñoz, in which he reflects upon the importance of eliminating the great inequalities still existing in our country's educational system, as well as the need to not be left behind vis-à-vis other countries.

The "Economy" section includes the second part of the article by Jorge Vargas about the legal controversies between Mexico and the United States with regard to Gulf of Mexico oil deposits.

Migration between Mexico and the United States is a complex question requiring a joint venture for its management. Gustavo Mohar tells us that without a doubt, immigration is the first point on the bilateral agenda between Mexico and the United States. He explains how disagreements about immigration have spurred the creation of a group of experts from both countries to come to a better understanding on the question.

In her article "Mexican-Canadian Relations," Isabel Studer analyzes the progress in bilateral relations since the signing

of NAFTA and finds that undoubtedly they have intensified and matured. She emphasizes the points of agreement and disagreement between both countries in different areas of foreign policy.

With literary grace, Luis Felipe Fabre describes traditional Mexican toys, the product of craftsmen who mix imagination, color and materials like clay, wood, wire and cardboard to give our children unique playthings. Like poetry, toys have their own musicality, the guide for their complementing each other and bringing forth wonderful works of art in playful symbiosis.

Washington's National Gallery of Art is featuring the exhibit "Olmec Art of Ancient Mexico" from June 30 to October 20 of this year. In her article, Professor Beatriz de la Fuente explains both the greatness of Olmec culture and the importance of the showing. Ann Cyphers tells us of the origins of Olmec culture and its most important centers in Mesoamerica. These two articles and the one on toys are the centerpieces of our section "The Splendor of Mexico."

Claire Joysmith, writing in English and Spanish, shares with us the problems translators encounter when dealing with Chicana literature.

The "Ecology" section in this issue presents a contribution by the rector of the university, José Sarukhán, in which he underlines the great difficulties involved in creating the awareness needed for long-term protection of the environment. His article emphasizes the role of women as educators in fostering this ecological awareness.

This issue's "In Memoriam" is dedicated to Roberto Moreno de los Arcos, a historian who enriched knowledge about the Mexican nation with his studies on the history of ideas, science and technology in Mexico, the history of Mexico City and the Enlightenment in eighteenth century New Spain, among many other topics. Rubén Bonifaz Nuño, one of our best known and most respected poets and academics, honors us with a text about this renowned Mexican.

As part of our celebration, this issue includes paintings by the great Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo. Samuel Morales Escalante writes of the painter, the man and his work. In the "Museums" section, Morales also invites us to visit the Rufino Tamayo Museum, one of the most important in Mexico City. ❧

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla
Editorial Director