

Arkansas Partners of the Americas Annual Meeting Minutes, Oct. 9, 2004  
Arkansas Archeological Facility, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Board President Susan Heily called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m. Present were:

President Susan Heily  
Secretary Louise Montgomery  
Past President Thecia Taylor  
Executive Director Bob Frans

Vice President --  
Treasurer Wayne Swegle  
Director Tom Green  
Director  
Director Diana Gonzales Worthen

Regional Vice Presidents present were:

Central Arkansas -- Carol Corning  
Northwest Arkansas --

Committee chairs present were:

Agriculture -- John Goodwin  
Culture --  
Democratic Initiative -- Jack E. Springborn, representing Bettie Lu Lancaster  
Direcciones Editor -- Bob Frans  
Education and Professional Development --  
Environment --  
Health and Wellness -- Thecia Taylor  
Public Relations and Partnership Development -- Bill Millager  
Sports --  
Women and Families -- Fran Free

Ad Hoc 2005 Convention Committee Members:

George Vena and Thecia Taylor

Visitors: Libby Wheeler, Jim and Jane Scroggs

Reports:

Executive Director: Frans noted that the international convention will occur in November in Guatemala and that several Arkansas Partners would visit Bolivia in conjunction with the convention. He handed out a new membership and officer list.

Frans noted that several people on the membership list have not paid dues in three years. In reaction to one of the names, Maura Lozana-Yancy, Worthen noted that she will publish information about the international convention in her newspaper, *Hola Arkansas*, the only bilingual newspaper in Arkansas.

After discussion of leaving her on the list and including other Spanish-language newspapers, informal agreement was reached to create a "professional courtesy"

membership category for such names. Spanish-language newspapers suggested to go into the category include

*El Latino, Hola Arkansas, El Tiempo* (published by the *NWA Times*), *El Heraldo* and *La Prensa* (published by the *Morning News of Northwest Arkansas*).

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the July 17, 2004, board meeting were approved after changes suggested by President Heily.

Treasurer's Report: Swegle reported a bank balance of \$5,794.78 on 9/30/2004. The report was approved.

#### Committee Reports:

Agriculture: Goodwin, who recently accepted the position chairing the committee, had no report.

Democratic Initiatives – Springborn, representing Lancaster, said he had no report. Lancaster was in Oregon for the birth of a grandchild.

#### Culture:

Education: George Vena noted that his wife, Sera Steiff-Vena, had begun using books and other materials from Santa Cruz in teaching about the environment of Bolivia in a Little Rock school. Sera would work with others in Little Rock schools to develop curriculum focused on Eastern Bolivia.

#### Environment:

Health and Wellness: Taylor noted that Dr. Jorge Ybarnegaray would arrive soon. A potluck is scheduled at her house at 6 p.m. Nov. 4. Bettie Lu Lancaster will host a reception for him at her home on Sunday, Nov. 7.

Public Relations & Partnership Development – Millager said he had no report. Heily noted that Millager had asked to be replaced as of Jan. 2004. Frans has asked to be replaced as executive director and as editor of *Direcciones* as well.

Women and Families – Free noted that she continues to work with Don Dombeck on finding outside funding to continue a project in Bolivia teaching gardening. Gabriel Rene Moreno University is interested in the project, and Winrock may help with funding. (Winrock is administering the Farmer-to-Farmer program that Partners had until this year.)

Nominating committee: Taylor said ballots had been sent and returned to Frans; the nominating committee consisted of Taylor, Diane Gonzales-Worthen, Sera Steiff-Vena and Wayne Swegle.

Re-elected was Susan Heily as president (through 2005). Named to take office in January 2005 were Tom Green, as regional vice president for Northwest Arkansas for a two-year term through 2006; LeAnn Robertson for a two-year director at large position to end in 2006; Joe Waldrum, Position 2, director at large, to serve through 2006.

Heily said Ed Hawkins, a NW Arkansas director at large, had asked to be replaced. It was determined to be moot as his position expires before the next meeting of the board.

Vena reported on his recent trip to Bolivia to lecture on the criminal justice system through a POA program, Ciudadanos Trabajando por la Justicia (CTPJ), a Partners of the Americas and USAID/Bolivia-financed effort. Marta Cecilia Villada oversees the POA portion of the program in La Paz, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. The project ends in September 2005. Vena and Frans discussed the relationship between Arkansas Partners and the project. Vena said he had been asked to invite the head prosecutors from Santa Cruz and La Paz to Arkansas to observe Arkansas' system before the end of 2004.

Heily noted that the Partnership has visitors coming in November, and since the international convention is also in November, the number of members available to host the visitors would be down.

Convention Committee report: Vena discussed possible fundraising possibilities that might be used to offset fixed costs of the 2005 convention in Little Rock. He expressed hope that registration costs could be kept low through getting donations from businesses. Frans had put together a Partners packet to send to potential contributors, he said. He said he had met with Barry Travis at the Arkansas Convention Bureau, which will cover the costs of a reception at the Historical Arts Museum on Friday night.

Diana Worthen put Vena and Taylor in touch with Alfredo Cerna at the Bank of America, Vena said, and they discussed having a booth at the convention. Vena also asked about interest in inviting an 18-20-piece Bolivian indigenous orchestra – Barroco Chiquitana -- to play at the convention. Reuben Suarez Arana directs it. The band would cost about \$30,000.

Worthen said Sept. 15-Oct. 15 was Hispanic Heritage Month and that Hispanic Women recognized Bill Millager recently. Also, Dr. Frans was honored for his volunteer service to the Hispanic community. Both, along with former Bolivian student Cassandra Foliart, were named Heroes of the Heart. Also, Hispanic women showcased UA's Bolivian students at their convention.

Taylor noted that Partners need to keep Bolivian students involved with Partners. Green said he would work with Worthen to arrange an event with the Bolivian students in January or February.

Central Arkansas regional report: Corning said the group would gather Nov. 4 for a potluck dinner at Taylor's house to visit with the Bolivian doctor.

Heily passed around information on the Coalition for Citizens for Diplomacy, a group POA has joined ([www.alliance-exchange.org/citizendiplomacy.html](http://www.alliance-exchange.org/citizendiplomacy.html)). She reminded members to fill out the Partners Count volunteer time form.

New business: Vena was asked what funding provided for his trip to speak to prosecutors in Bolivia. Taylor said it came from the criminal justice program, Ciudadanos Trabajando por la Justicia (CTPJ), the criminal justice program funded by Partners of the Americas and USAID/Bolivia. Green moved and the motion was seconded to follow through with Vena's wish to bring Bolivian prosecutors to Arkansas. Discussion followed about determining how POA and those funding projects that Partners carry out, such as USAID, relate financially. Discussion ensued about the relationship between POA's Democratic Initiative and the criminal justice project funded by USAID in Bolivia. Vena noted that many paid employees in Bolivia used to be part of Democratic Initiative. Questions were posed about how Arkansas could be involved in the justice project.

The motion to support Vena in bringing prosecutors to Arkansas was approved.

Heily noted that the next meeting would be Jan. 15 at the Italian Gardens in Russellville. The meeting was dismissed at about 4 p.m.