



DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas
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Outgoing President's Message

I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve this chapter. It has been a unique and interesting experience which I will never forget. You have several long lasting accomplishments for which you can be proud:

1. An online travel guide for Eastern Bolivia.
2. Online minutes and newsletter.
3. 3 south to north travelers in the past 2 years.
4. 3 north to south travelers.
5. UCA support program for Bolivian students.
6. The first Maria Teresa Frans Scholarship was awarded.
7. And you hosted the international Convention.

Let's rejoice over this hard work and look to **Steven Neuse's** incoming president's letter for the direction of the next two years.

Susan Heily

Incoming President's Message

I thought I'd think aloud about some of the things I hope Arkansas Partners can work toward next year. But before I do that I want to look back a bit. If you couldn't make the

International Partners Convention in Little Rock in November, you missed a good one. Some of the sessions were the best I have ever attended—at any convention! Apparently, others felt the same way. Many unsolicited remarks about how good the convention was came my way. Needless to say, many Arkansas partners helped make it a success, but most of all kudos for conference co-chairs, **Thecia Taylor** and **George Vena**. Thanks for all your great work. We can't forget **Margaret Clark** either. She put together a fantastic pre-conference leadership conference in Fayetteville. Finally, I want to congratulate **Sue Heily** for her strong leadership over the last two years. I've learned a lot from her. Thanks Sue!

What are we going to do next year? Well first of all the board has been strengthened by the addition of Margaret Clark who will lead our women and family committee, and Jorge Mendoza and Nadine Spears as at-large board members. All three of them have had projects in Bolivia and therefore know the ropes.

We've not had many projects the past couple of years, largely because of the big task of putting together the Convention. Our Agriculture chair **John Goodwin** and **Bob Frans** have met with Bolivian President **Jorge Ibarnegaray** about reviving that program and I am sure we will have more to come in culture projects under **Jo Ann Kaminskys** leadership.

Some specifics:

1. **Bill Millager** was instrumental in setting up an international POA Blog, a project he will be busy with.

2. I hope we can work towards doing something we wanted to do for the convention, namely bringing up to Arkansas the wonderful Baroque Mission music from Chiquitos.

3. I want to explore the possibility of setting up a formal tour of Bolivia from the Altiplano to Cochabamba, to East Bolivia. Several chapters have done this with their Southern Partners successfully.

4. We need to continue our mission of growing our Bolivian student population and helping make Arkansas their second home. To that end, we are working to send (through University of Arkansas, Fayetteville) the International Admissions Director and a faculty member to visit all three of our Bolivian chapters.

I'll do the best I can the next two years.

Steven M. Neuse

And the BIG story --

of course, is the mid-November convention of the Partners of the Americas, referred to above by Steven. We can only echo his remarks by saying it was a big event, especially for the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners, largely responsible for planning and putting it together. The herculean efforts of Thecia and George, followed by those of Margaret for the Fayetteville event, and Mark for the HAM event, plus the contributions of many others made it an occasion to be remembered for a long time. Echoing Steven again: if you weren't there you missed a good one!

There's little need to go into much detail, except to say that the content of the meetings was first class, the visit to the Clinton Library outstanding, as well as the HAM event, and capped off with an absolutely marvelous dinner dance livened by the smooth and dance-able music of Bob Boyd and orchestra.

It seems almost traitorous to offer negative comments in the light of such a successful conference. But we will anyway! Attendance

was lower than was expected, even from our own partnership. This, in spite of the excellent publicity given in advance of the meeting. We suspect it was due, partly, to the rather high registration fee required. Was it not important enough to us? We were told last summer, in planning sessions, that if we raised enough money to support the convention the registration fee could be lowered. Obviously, we did not succeed, but neither did the Washington office. Something to think about as we peer into the future for Partners.

Scholarship Award

The Maria Teresa Frans Scholarship fund has been in existence for several years, but has been essentially dormant for the past few years. Recently, the Board decided to award a small amount out of this fund to a deserving Bolivian student on campus at the University of Arkansas. The student selected was Ninón Gamarra and the amount to be awarded \$500. Since we're close to the end of the fall semester, the award will be for the spring semester - congratulations, Ninón!

Very few contributions have been made to the fund in recent years. However, the fund is still active, and if we are to continue helping Bolivian students in this tangible way more contributions are needed. The Board also agreed to designate the Treasurer as the contact person with control over the fund (receiving contributions and disbursement of awards). Starting January 1, this will be **George Vena**. Please send your contributions to him and he will periodically have them deposited to the Maria Teresa Frans Scholarship account at the University.

New Board

The new Board, resulting from the recent election, was announced at the November Board meeting. They are as follows:

PRESIDENT - **Steven Neuse**

VICE PRESIDENT - **Wayne Swegle**

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, NW AR -
Thomas Green

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT,
CENTRAL AR - **Thecia Taylor**

SECRETARY - **Sera Vena**

TREASURER - **George Vena**

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (2006) - **Le Ann
Robertson**

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (2006) - **Joe**

Waldrum

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (2007) - **Nadine**

Spears

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (2007) - **Jorge**

Mendoza

PAST PRESIDENT - **Sue Heily**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - **Bob Frans**

The above, then, constitutes the new Board for 2006. Their duties start the first of January 2006.

Those leaving the Board are **Louise Montgomery**, **Diana Worthen**, and **Ed Hawkins**. Of the Committee Chairs, also members of the Board, **Mark Robertson** has resigned as Chair of the Environment Committee and will also be leaving the Board. For these people leaving, we owe you our thanks and our gratitude for your dedication to the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners. Congratulations on your retirement!

And speaking of Boards, we have a fairly recent communication from the student group, the International Bolivian organization (IBO). They have elected new officers for the year as

follows: **Ninon Gamarra**, President; **Valeria Mustafa**, Vice President; and **Karen Balderrama**, Secretary/ Treasurer. Congratulations to you for your new positions. We hope to maintain close contact with you in the months to come.

November Board Meeting

The Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners held their regular quarterly meeting on November 13, 2005 at the conclusion of the International Conference in Little Rock. There was good attendance at this meeting which included **Dr. Jorge Ibarregaray**, President of the Santa Cruz partnership, and **Mr. Harold Isevich**, a delegate to the convention. Later, both spoke to the Board, outlining plans for the future and expressing renewed commitments to future participation and strengthening the ties between our partnerships.

President **Sue Heily** called the meeting to order at about 10:00 am and several items of interest were discussed. Jorge reviewed the work going on in Santa Cruz, which led to a discussion of how we should relate to the Trinidad group and to Cobija. During these discussions it was noted that **Elizabeth Bowles**, delegate from La Paz had been helpful in volunteering to put us in touch with new people in Cobija as well as Riberalta. It was agreed that we should initiate early discussions with those persons with the view towards re-activating the Cobija group as well as incorporating a new interest in Riberalta. **Steven Neuse**, incoming President, will be in charge of these negotiations.

In his report, **Bob Frans** noted that in the future, the Treasurer of our partnership would be the contact person for administering the Maria Teresa Scholarship Fund. In an earlier action, the Board had selected **Ninon Gamarra** to be the recipient of this year's award. (In a later action after the Board meeting, Frans contacted the appropriate University officials for awarding \$500 to Ninon. The money was then

credited to her University account)

It was also noted in Frans' report that **Helen Wilson** of Hot Springs was to be made an Honorary Member. George Vena noted that Helen was a medical missionary to Bolivia for some 25 years. She is in her '90's but still drives to Little Rock for various Partners functions.

Bill Millager reported on his activities during the convention, drumming up interest in creating a Partners of the Americas Blog. He received considerable interest for this endeavor and asked that (1) he be authorized to research and create a free blog to serve all partnerships; (2) that the blog's purpose be to facilitate activities to advance purposes espoused during the convention; (3) that the Arkansas Partnership at large be seen as the initiating sponsor, not Millager as an individual member. This proposal received enthusiastic approval from the Board (see below for a separate item on the creation and operation of the blog).

The meeting adjourned at noon after noting that the next meeting would be January 14, 10:00 am, Russellville

New Partners Blog

This item is submitted by Bill and reports on his activities at the convention. He reports:

A discussion with POA Board Member **Jan Hertzberg** led him to mention the utility of a BLOG to facilitate further exchanges of information, plans, and accomplishments among all chapters and staff. Hertzberg agreed and urged that they meet with **Matt Clausen** to determine actions. No meeting was possible, but Clausen suggested bringing up the idea in **Adam Stubits's** Partners Counts session. Stubits was supportive as well.

Malcolm Butler, reacting to Millager's suggestion of the blog, said "Do it! And we'll publicize it. De Acuerdo?" And he replied, "Done."

During the banquet, Millager briefly discussed

the project with Clausen and Stubits together, adding that staff support would be essential, since he would be unable to provide very much in the way of administration. They agreed, with apparent enthusiasm.

(At our Board meeting) Neuse moved and Taylor seconded a motion approving Millager's pursuing the blog; the motion passed unanimously. (Since the meeting, Millager has created a blog on Blogger.com, which is now part of the Googleplex. The blog is Partners Intercom. Its address is <http://partners-intercom.blogspot.com> . He invites all to visit the site).

The BLOG includes a number of interesting links, including one for the El Deber newspaper in Santa Cruz and one for the latest Google news on Bolivia (very crucial and fascinating information on electoral developments and on Bolivian-U.S. relations). As *Direcciones* press time approaches, discussions on technical issues and staff support are continuing with Partners Washington.

So far, Millager says, "Blogger.com makes blogging really easy. The ads are true."

Editor's note: Bill's been busy! He also submitted the following:

Looking back 10 years in *Direcciones*

Looking back ten years with Editor Bob Frans - to *Direcciones* 13, December, 1995 for just one of the great, timeless articles:

Tuition Waiver Approved by Chancellor

We're pleased to announce that the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville has granted our request for a waiver of out-of-state tuition for students enrolling in the University from Bolivia. Chancellor **Dan Ferritor** has indicated that this will be a three-year experimental program and covers all students coming to the University from Bolivia. Full details of the program have not yet been finalized, but will be worked out shortly.

We have **Max Frydman** of the Santa Cruz

partnership to thank for urging us to make the request which got us started. Our Kansas-Paraguay partnership was most helpful with their assistance, since they have had such a program in place for several years and were able to provide us with details of their plan.

And now, for the item you've all been waiting for:

DUES – yes, it's time!!

Probably you don't like to be reminded of this time for dues any more than your Executive Director (he never knows which hat to wear in making this plea!) likes doing this. However, it's one of those little "necessary evils" of life that we are all faced with at times in our lives. So, why don't we all get busy and get this little chore out of the way before the new year gets too firmly entrenched. You just send me (Bob Frans - address at the top on the masthead) a check for your dues - \$10 students, \$20 for individuals, \$30 for families and \$100 for sustaining. It's then recorded and sent to the Treasurer.

Why do we need dues? While it's not much on an individual basis, when the money is all put together, it contributes greatly to our ability to continue as a viable partnership. We've had some unusual and greater than ordinary expenses this past couple of months, due to the convention, and as our Treasurer reminded us at the last Board meeting - we need money! So, won't you do your part and take care of this little item soon? Thanks so much. And as we're constantly reminded on public radio or TV, the sooner we pay up the sooner we can end this campaign for money. Let's do it!

Final thoughts

We were kind of saving this spot for a late submission, or "breaking news" about Partners. None has come in so your Editor will try to fill up a little of this space. There is a little news as this is being written - it looks as though **Evo Morales** will be the next President of Bolivia. Judge for yourselves as to whether this is a positive or negative note - we've heard both. Go to one of Bill Millager's sources listed above for more details.

Can't conclude without more words of thanks - thank you, Sue Heily, for leading this group through a difficult two years - it wasn't easy when so many were distracted by the all-consuming convention. Thank you George Vena and Thecia Taylor for assuming the immense burden of planning and executing the convention, and to you Margaret Clark for your efforts in the Fayetteville gathering before the convention. A big thanks to you, Steven Neuse, for all your efforts as our Vice President, in assisting Sue on many projects, and just becoming better acquainted with Partners - that will serve us all well. Thanks, also, to the Board - for your faithful attendance to Board meetings, for your inputs in all that goes on in this partnership - for you, Louise Montgomery, for your thoughtful and accurate minutes of those meetings, and to you, Wayne Swegle, for your ready checkbook when money was needed. Without doubt, some have been left out of this list, so a blanket thanks to all who hold Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners dear in your hearts. It is worth the effort!

Finally, do have a great Holiday Season, which includes a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! That's our politically correct greeting, even though some of you may not see this until after Christmas!