

Arkansas Partners of the Americas Board Minutes, July 17, 2004
Russellville, Arkansas

Board President Susan Heily called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Present were:

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

Vice President Steve Neuse
Treasurer Wayne Swegle
Director Tom Green
Director Le Ann Robertson
Director Diana Gonzales Worthen

Regional Vice Presidents present were:

Carol Corning, Central Arkansas

Committee chairs present were:

Culture – Jo Ann and Hank Kaminsky
Democratic Initiative – Bettie Lu Lancaster
Education and Professional Development – Sera Steiff-Vena
Health and Wellness – Thecia Taylor
Women and Families – Fran Free

Ad Hoc 2005 Convention Committee Members:

George Vena, Margaret Clark and Thecia Taylor

President Heily called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. in the Italian Gardens Restaurant and gave those in attendance a revised agenda (Attachment 1).

Secretary's Report:

After Heily introduced Barbara Bloch, a visitor from POA headquarters, minutes for January and April board meetings were approved (JoAnn Kaminsky asked for correction of two names in the section on Culture, Robert Ross and Buddhi Kling). Both sets of minutes were unanimously approved. It was requested that the minutes not be sent out to email mailboxes because it causes their email to overflow. It was requested and unanimously approved that minutes be posted on the web, and members could download them. Louise said that she'd ask Bill Millager to post the minutes.

Treasurer's report (Attachment 2). Treasurer Swegle provided a written account of the chapter's funds showing a bank balance in Regions Bank of \$5,981.61. He noted that he and some other members, while preparing paperwork for an application to reinstate the group's 501-c-3 (IRS tax-exempt) status, had a question about whether funds issued to FTF by the Washington office could go to other programs. Bloch confirmed that leftover funds could be re-allocated by the Arkansas POA chapter as needed. The Treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

Special Report from Barbara Bloch: Bloch concentrated her remarks on how POA members can secure funding to do projects. She opened with thanking the Arkansas chapter for hosting the 2005 convention in Little Rock; she called it an "opportunity for

outreach.” Bloch noted that POA was formed in March 1964, making this the 40th anniversary year. She called for “strategic revisioning” and noted: “The environment is very different now than when we started.” The group started as a governmental agency promoting better understanding, people-to-people contact and sharing of common interests. But growth of democratization globally brought competition and the demand that POA “reposition” itself. The goals of POA remain as before, she said, “But the reality is that the financing sources, including the government, is getting more and more restrictive. They’re not funding volunteers, as when we started, exchanges in health, agriculture, etc.. Now they’re looking at specific countries, funding thematic areas, looking globally, making us look at aligning with other groups.”

“When you go for government funding, you go with a consortium. We might do the Latin American piece, someone else does the Asia piece, etc. There are no longer funds just for Latin America.

Bloch said Partners has set up a new system for funding projects. The following paragraphs are a summary of her statements: Partners chapters used to send proposals to Washington; now they have to come from the southern country. The Arkansas chapter is lucky because Bolivia is a focus of the U.S. government; Washington is looking at the whole region and democratization. National POA has been given money to open an office in Bolivia (for the “*justicia*” program). The Bolivia chapters have to initiate proposals and work with other groups. Eastern Bolivia wrote a proposal and was awarded a grant to train citizen judges.

“Marta Cecilia Villada of the POA (Washington) office moved to Bolivia last year ; she sent some brochures. (See attachment 3, document II, describing the \$30,300 funding for 12 months to train citizen judges in Santa Cruz and Trinidad.) Lancaster attended a meeting on the project. Marta Cecilia feels Arkansas is in a wonderful position to contribute to that project through travel grants. She wants Arkansas involvement, not just in Eastern Bolivia but in the whole country. Citizen judges – you might call them juries.

(Continuing summary of Bloch’s statements) The Arkansas-Eastern Bolivia POA chapter is the only one in Bolivia that received a grant. Marta Cecilia wants someone to make an assessment of the entire country. Research is needed to create a databank of all volunteers and their talents, including Arkansas as well Bolivia and North Carolina (N.C. is paired with Cochabamba in Bolivia.). Look at possible consultants who could contribute to development of the judicial sector, building democracy in the future. Marta Cecilia wants a Partners chapter to have the first center in Santa Cruz and wants to include Arkansas people. The *justicia* project does not fund research but would fund travel. We’ve talked about George Vena, who is a (U.S.) prosecutor, going there to do an assessment.

(Continuing Bloch summary) Resuming discussion of the POA funding history, the organization initially got 98 percent of its funding from the federal U.S. government, then drifted toward foundations, particularly the Kellogg Foundation, before returning to reliance on the U.S. government. By law, POA must match 20 percent of government funding with money from other sources. The government has been pushing volunteers, and lawyers for not-for-profit groups like POA say that if the group can show the value of volunteer time, the volunteer time value could be shown as a 20-, 30- or 40- percent

matching component, with that portion of the funding recorded as coming from the private sector.

POA gets few individual contributions, by comparison with groups like Heifer International, which gets most of its funding from individuals rather than the U.S. government.

POA bought a computer program to track volunteer time that has the potential to feed into the Center of information that Marta Cecilia is creating for Bolivia. (See Attachment 5, the form for reporting volunteer time, and the document with it titled "Partners Counts.>"). By each POA member entering his/her profile and interests, the databank becomes a powerful management tool that permits POA to link with other organizations and provide talent and expertise for projects generated by other organizations.

(Continuing Bloch summary) Moving in the direction of linking with other organizations, POA has joined a couple of groups. They are the Global Alliance for Democracy, with POA being one of the groups in the Alliance, and VEGA, Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance, which POA has also joined. These alliances are mechanisms for placing volunteers in your Partners countries or others.. POA is looking at handling the Latin America part. This is broadening the partnership. (See Attachment 6, which includes a brochure from the Interamerican Democracy Network, listing POA as a member, and a POA document on the network, plus a brochure on VEGA. Also with those is a brochure on the American Fellows Program, for which POA was awarded a Department of State grant in March 2003.)

USAID funds VEGA. Jim May is in charge and is not a POA employee. The direction we're going is broadening, the term networking, linking with others, channeling our volunteers through other organizations that have funding. We're getting subcontracts, small pieces, instead of being the contractors ourselves.

(Continuing Bloch summary) When we talk about decentralization, proposals have to come from the host country. Heifer said it would have to come from the Heifer field offices, local chapters. So Bolivia POA members must talk in Bolivia to Heifer; the proposal comes from there, then goes to Heifer Little Rock. Decentralization doesn't mean you don't have a role, but you have to work from Bolivia.

Because you're having the convention, you can get a lot of visibility, make yourselves known to the big corporations, ask what kind of funding is available. If a corporation supports the convention, it will get publicity and maybe support a project. The board's responsibility is to set strategic directions for the program, just as that is the role of the national board. Fundraising is a big factor, as is oversight of the programs and finances. "Strategic directions" entails building alliances with other organizations to raise money to supplement what the Partnership gets from Washington POA,

(Continuing Bloch summary) One last change: Broadening and cross partnering. For example, the program we'll start with Brazil, EDUCAR (See attachment eight, a POA press release explaining EDUCAR.), working with youth alternative education programs to keep kids in schools.

I have been asked to tell the group that EDUCAR is in some POA chapters in Brazil and some areas along the Brazil-Bolivia border at Cobija. "The director of the

program is interested in piggy-backing on the arts education programs that you have done, possibly in working with teachers in Brazil. This could spill over from Pando into Brazil. A volunteer could fly to Santa Cruz, then to Brazil through Cobija – delivering programs along the way, a double whammy. A Partner in this project would have to be willing to spend a great deal of his/her time in Brazil. (End summary of Bloch's remarks)

Bloch summed up her presentation by saying that "There are opportunities, different, but there is a lot more out there if you organized and take advantage of it." She added: One last thing: the Fellows program for government officials in decision-making positions applies in both Arkansas or Bolivia and for those who want internships in similar agencies in Arkansas or Bolivia. Teachers are not included. But someone in the state Department of Education could go to Bolivian for 2-7 months in the Ministry of Education and shadow someone. Or it could be tourism."

Gonzales-Worthen said the Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas holds an annual conference with people from around Arkansas to discuss seven major themes aimed at breaking down barriers. She said Margaret Clark is on the board of the organization. Several people in the group have gotten grants, she said, and suggested that the group might be a model. The 2004 conference is in the Arkansas Union, UA-Fayetteville, on Saturday, Sept. 18. (See Attachment seven.)

Bloch said the POA national board meets at the end of July 2004 to decide projects and grants. Bloch said POA gets \$10 million, of which 98 percent comes from the U.S. government, she said, adding. "POA has a new board. We need new skills from our board. The board is now appointed. We got three new members in March, two are coming in July. Twelve are elected, seven to nine will be appointed. We want to keep representation. We will have 4-5 Americans. Members can recommend board members to Claudia Calderon or to Malcolm Butler. Either Malcolm or a current board member would approach the person, get a sense of the person, then that person would meet with the board, etc."

"When you go out fundraising, potential donors ask who's on the board. The board can lend credibility. We have a lot of credibility, but we haven't marketed it."

2005 Convention plans

Vena: Winrock is constructing green buildings in Little Rock; they will be ready for the 2005 convention. Winrock will have a booth at our convention in the Peabody Hotel. In Antigua (at the 2004 international convention), Winrock will pass out information and have a booth, maybe show a video.

Bloch: \$20,000 is the estimated fixed costs, with another \$20,000 estimated meal costs which will be recouped from registration fees. Because of the correlation between fees and the number attending, the goal is to keep costs down. The Peabody will charge \$99 for a room. We'd like to get underwriting for registration fees. Vena said he would like to find underwriting for the reception Thursday evening in the Clinton library.

Various members offered to help with NW Arkansas businesses.

Neuse handed out copies of the travelers guide on E. Bolivia that he modified from the North Carolina / Cochabamba travelers guide. He said he would accept contributions

until August 1, at which time he would complete the project. All agreed that he should post it on the chapter's website.

Heily gave copies of the travel checklist to each member (See attachment nine). Frans reminded the group of the MOP, Manual of Operating Procedures. He noted that it dovetailed with the checklist.

Neuse stated that The AIDN, InterAmerican Democracy Network (See attachment ten.), seemed to be a worthwhile organization to work with.

Bloch stated that the contact is Jason Marzack. IADN is the current incarnation of the Democratic Initiative that POA started in 1992-3. She said the network has funds to make grants to members of the network for work on better government. "If you, as a partnership, join the network, Arkansas-E. Bolivia Partners or the reverse, you'll receive calls for proposals -- \$50,000-200,000. It costs nothing to belong to the network." Noting that the brochure priced joining at \$75, Lancaster moved to take \$75 from leftover Democratic Initiative funds to join the network. The motion passed unanimously.

Heily stated that the chapter's rechartering paperwork has been submitted to Washington POA. Bloch said that Bolivia hasn't completed its paperwork, but Maria Christian may have brought it (to Washington) with her.

These changes were directed to the Executive Director: Sera Streiff-Vena asked that her email be corrected by removal of the "mail" just after the @ sign, making it serav@uca.edu. George Vena asked that his email be George.vena@usdoj.gov. Joann Kaminsky earlier had asked that her email be joannk6145@sbcglobal.net.

Heily said Neuse had been approved for a travel grant to go to the convention in Guatemala and to travel to Bolivia for leadership training. Bloch said the deadline for a travel scholarship to go to the convention is Sept. 1; the winner would travel to Bolivia before or after the convention.

NEW BUSINESS:

Heily: The annual meeting in October – I've asked Tom Green to chair a committee to plan the annual meeting and come up with a simple flyer by August. Neuse and Free volunteered to work with him.

Heily said she has a new job and as a new employee will not be eligible for personal leave. Therefore she cannot attend the international convention although money is usually allocated for the president to attend the convention. Frans said if the president gets a leadership award, s/he would be responsible for room and board, while POA covers air fare. Bloch said if someone goes to the convention with a travel grant, it includes airfare to Guatemala and going to the leader orientation, and POA covers the hotel and food.

Taylor said the Arkansas chapter has set \$800 for the convention. She moved that that amount be given to Neuse to attend the convention. Montgomery seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Bloch noted that Corning might apply for the scholarship (the one with a Sept. 1 deadline) to travel to Bolivia and Guatemala.

Bloch said travel grants for the convention, if the member goes to Bolivia before or after the convention, can include Guatemala. The same rules apply to Bolivians coming to Arkansas (presumably for the 2005 convention).

Heily: Nominating committee – the past president, by the MOP, is in charge of a nominating committee. Frans said the board must designate the committee. Neuse nominated Gonzales-Worthen and Libby Wheeler, and Heily nominated Wayne Swegle and Sera Vena. Montgomery moved approval, Lancaster seconded; approval was unanimous.

Heily said Don Dombek said he cannot continue as chair of the Agriculture committee, though he asked to remain a member of the committee. The name of Phil Serafini, who does agricultural marketing, was suggested to be Agriculture chair. Neuse said he will find out before the October meeting whether Serafini will serve. Frans and Neuse agreed to resolve who might be Agri chair.

Heily asked whether the board preferred meeting at Ark. Tech U or at the Italian Gardens Restaurant where we were meeting. Unanimously, the Italian Gardens was chosen for future meetings.

Regional VP: Corning invited all to attend the dinner with Bloch at Lily's in Little Rock; she had reserved space for 30-50 people.

Committee Reports:

Frans, Agriculture: Dombek is working on a project with Fran Free.

Free: We went to Santa Cruz last August, worked in Colonia Pirai With 14-18-year old kids, 200 male and female, The kids are rural but live in the Colonia for three years to learn agriculture, then return home and teach. She said they are communicating with Winrock about working together. She noted that the POA agriculture committee began with Claude Gillette's back-yard gardens, and that the current project is coming full circle back to the beginning.

Gonzales-Worthen suggested that Free talk with Springale High, which has a TV production station and might do a video on the program.

Culture: Joann Kaminsky said her committee came up with eight ideas, which she sent to Aida McKenny in Bolivia and Gabriela Equino. She also sent ideas from Myron Brody for fundraising. She suggested using Ron Nesson to do a workshop on fundraising. She said he might be willing to do one at the Arkansas convention in 2005 in Little Rock. Vena asked if he could do one at the October Arkansas annual meeting. After some discussion, Montgomery moved that we provide a stipend of up to \$200 for Nesson to do a 2-hour (maximum) workshop at Arkansas' annual meeting. Taylor seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Kaminsky's second idea was to send Eleanor Lux, a crafts person from Eureka Springs who does beading and weaving, to Bolivia, and Caroline Kinsey, a brass teacher, because Bolivia had requested a brass player. She said she and Kinsey had applied for a travel grant. The third project: Kaminsky would return to Bolivia to teach teaching democratic values through art, with an added environmental element that NUR students use in working with high school students. Art therapist Budhi Kling is working with women in shelters and is working toward having a booklet to use in Bolivia. Bloch suggested she talk to EDUCAR about this project. Hank Kaminsky said he'd delayed his project in Bolivia for another year because he wants someone from Bolivia to come to Arkansas so that he can train the person before he goes to Bolivia. His project is to build sidewalks with democratic values written into them, "sculpture that you walk on."

Democratic Initiatives: Lancaster said she is awaiting word from Santa Cruz on a justice project that she has discussed with someone there. She said Neuse or Vena might go. Bloch said SC had just been awarded \$30,000. She reminded Lancaster that projects in Arkansas are possible.

Education: Streiff-Vena said she has talked with Mark Robertson about an environmental project with Dunbar Teaching Gardens in science, ecology, environment and food – an urban garden directed by Pratt Rimmel. It was noted that her plans sound similar in some regards to those of Free and entail working with youth, developing work skills, a youth entrepreneurial garden. She said she is working with Vicki Gonterman, international studies coordinator at Gibbs International Studies and Foreign Language Magnet Elementary School on a slide show on the life of a child in Bolivia. She said they're considering updating the slides to use for teaching about Bolivia in schools. She said Arkansas school need materials to meet benchmark standards set by the state.

Streiff-Vena said she has several possible committee members. She said she has contact with organic gardeners in NWA. Corning said Greenwood has an outstanding outdoor garden. She said she would like to work on the project, as did Gonzales-Worthen.

Environment: Robertson was away on work, so no report was given.

Health: Taylor said she doesn't know who her Southern counterpart is.

Membership Millager was not present, so no report was given.

Women and Family: Free said her sole project is the one she's pursuing with Dombek. She said she has not heard from Santa Cruz but will renew efforts.

Names from Sera: Sera Streiff-Vena, Education Committee, Leah Wilkinson, UALR Dept. of Foreign Languages; Pratt Rimmel, director of Dunbar Garden Project, OR; Kristy Kidd, Planet Earth teacher, Dunbar Middle School; Vicki Gonterman, International Studies Coordinator, Gibbs International Studies and Foreign Language, Magnet Elementary.

Working with Mark Robertson, Environmental chair.

Heily challenged the Board to participate in Partners Counts.