
DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas
Bob Frans, Ed., 276 Alzheimer Dr., Fayetteville AR 72704

April, 2000

President's Message

It is a privilege to comment on the future of our partnership as we begin the new millennium. Looking back I see a string of remarkable accomplishments from our small groups in Arkansas, Santa Cruz and the Beni. Looking ahead, I foresee significant opportunities.

To put the look back in perspective, I note that Partners is the only functioning legacy of President Kennedy's Alianza du Progreso. It is my belief that the personal nature of our south/north relationships provides much of the explanation for this success over nearly 35 years. It is also the foundation of our efficiency and ability to address some real needs of our membership in Arkansas and Bolivia.

A brief and partial listing of our accomplishments and current activities is illustrative:

P 80 Bolivian students at the University of Arkansas on a special scholarship created at the suggestion of our chapter.

P A special education project, "Hope for the Special" that has won international recognition for its assistance to special education programs in Beni and Santa Cruz.

P A visit by 35 Arkansas Rural Leadership Development participants to Bolivia.

P Bolivian women experiencing U.S. democratic institutions and processes while focusing on women's roles.

P Assistance to the medical community in Santa Cruz in the form of surplus medical equipment.

P Assistance to the newly created forest areas from managers of the National Forest areas in Arkansas with support from the Sister Forest Program (USDA).

P College of Education exchanges for in-service teacher training and curriculum development in ESL, math and other subject matter areas.

P Helped to start the first cervical cancer screening program, thought to have reduced the incidence of cervical cancer by 40% and led to support to breast cancer screening.

P Introduction of new dental materials, equipment and procedures through reciprocal exchanges.

P Planted the idea of making buildings wheelchair accessible.

P Provided ophthalmologists and doctors to help set up programs for the blind and visually disabled.

P Initiated the first Brucellosis screening program in Bolivia.

P Helped to introduce backyard and neighborhood gardens and cooperatives that led to the creation of a clothes manufacturing and bakery cooperative.

P Supported the creation of the first youth symphony in Santa Cruz through exchanges and donating instruments.

P Helped to introduce the Suzuki method of violin and piano instruction.

P Supported many artist exchanges.

All of these activities were successful principally because of the good will of the Partner participants. The individuals themselves were the only resource available.

As we look to the future the fundamental resources, people and good will, remain unchanged. The context, however, is changing radically. Santa Cruz is a city of nearly 1,000,000 inhabitants with a vibrant, rapidly evolving economy. Trinidad, Beni has a paved all-season road. The internet is everywhere in Bolivia. Cellular phones are everywhere in Bolivia. Santa Cruz is the major supplier of natural gas to the industrial region in Brazil. Soon the rail and paved highway links will enable overland travel and transport from Santa Cruz to either coast. There is barge traffic through the Rio Parana/Rio Plata waterways to the Atlantic. In the Precambrian shelf in eastern Santa Cruz and Beni large, economically accessible deposits of gold, copper and other minerals have been identified. The row-crop production area in Santa Cruz is nearly 2.5 million acres, an area that rivals our own central delta of the Mississippi/Arkansas river basins. There is an additional 7 million acres that will be brought into production over the next 10 years. Santa Cruz is a leader in the environmental movement in Latin America. The potential for eco-tourism is significant. Eastern Bolivia is no longer the sleepy, provincial area where we began to work only a few years ago.

The question for us as we move into this new millennium is how do we, as a partnership and as individuals, continue to participate in and support the changes that are taking place in Bolivia? How do we link what is happening in Arkansas with our friends and

associates in Bolivia?

The Partner's organization in Washington D.C. continues to facilitate our access to official U.S. government development assistance resources through projects such as the Women in Democracy (USIA), the Farmer-to-Farmer Program (USDA/USAID), Family Planning Reproductive Health Grants (USAID) and so on. We have and will continue to do all that we can as a group to benefit from these resources. At the same time, we have the opportunity to develop linkages and activities that do not involve public funding. The opportunities we foresee include private philanthropy, private investment, for-profit eco-tourism, self-funded student and professional exchanges. You all tell the Board what you want to do. Look to the resources close at hand and wonder about the possibilities within your existing universe.

I note as an example of taking advantage of the resources close at hand the Maria Teresa Villanueva de Frans Memorial Scholarship Fund put together by the parents of the Bolivian students at the University of Arkansas. Similarly, our Chapter's "Hope for the Special" continues with resources of friends and neighbors of the Partners involved.

Bolivia remains a relatively poor country. Santa Cruz is the bright spot in that panorama. We can look to benefit from the positive economic and social development that is taking place there. Doing so will benefit our partnership, our partners, and ourselves.

Phil Serafini

Editor's note

Sorry for this long spell of time between issues of *Direcciones*. Your editor can only plead his usual proclivities for procrastination, plus too much travel around the holidays. That's all behind now, and we've got a lot to report on. Since the last issue, we've had the 1999 Annual Meeting and associated Board Meeting, and the first weekend of February, we had the first Board Meeting for 2000 (held a week late because of the snow!). So, with this issue, we'll try to catch you up on all the activities that have occurred.

Meetings of the Board

Annual Meeting

The 1999 Annual and Board Meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Russellville on October 23, 1999. Since attendance from the general membership was low, it was decided to simply constitute the meeting as a meeting of the Board, and to conduct whatever business there was to consider. Some of the highlights of the meeting are as follows:

- The Executive Director noted changes that had

occurred in the national office, which had eliminated each partnership having its own representative, and that contacts were now to be made through a committee or to specific representatives for program areas. Consequently, the Board decided to investigate our present committee structure, with a view towards making it consistent with the program areas of the national office and with our partnership in East Bolivia.

- The Executive Director also reported on the results of the election for officers for 2000. They are: President - **Phil Serafini**, Vice President - **Thecia Taylor**, Secretary - **Sue Heily**, Treasurer - **Paul Noland**, Regional Vice President for Northwest Arkansas - **Laurin Wheeler**, Regional Vice President for Central Arkansas - **Don Thurman**, Directors-at-Large - **Mary Anne Sennett** and **Peggy Turbyfill** (2000), and **Robert Reilly** and **Mark Robertson** (2001) **Kay Kraeft** becomes Past President, and **Bob Frans** is Executive Director.
- **Bettie Lu Lancaster** reported that the new display board was moving along nicely and would soon be available for viewing and use. She also reported on the new women in politics project, co-shared with North Carolina and Utah, indicating that Bolivian women were to visit our respective partnerships in April to learn more about our political processes.
- **Phil Serafini** reported on Farmer to Farmer activities, indicating that 17 trips were planned for the 1999-2000 year, focusing on animal production, technology transfer, soil conservation, and water resources and legislation. He has formed a new committee to assist in planning these programs.
- **Margaret Clark** indicated that there will be Bolivian students graduating in June and that we should be thinking about sponsoring a social event marking the occasion. Undoubtedly, families of some of these students will be in Arkansas to observe graduation.
- **Thecia Taylor** reported on efforts to get a dental program started and on efforts to get medical supplies to Bolivia. **Charles Hines** is assisting in this project.
- The trip report from **Mark Robertson** was discussed and individual recommendations that were made. More details concerning this trip will be found under the section on Travels.
- The Board heard statements, both from the outgoing President and the incoming President. The latter shared his hopes for the coming year.

February Meeting

The Board met in Russellville on February 2, 2000 at the Arkansas Tech Campus. A visitor to the meeting, Mr. **Roberto Mere**, was introduced by **Mary Anne Sennett**. Roberto works in the area of domestic violence with Hispanics in Northwest Arkansas, and teaches Spanish at the Community College in Rogers.

Executive Director **Bob Frans** reported that he needed help in producing *Direcciones* and was urged to appoint an editorial board to assist him with this publication and with the web site for our partnership. He also reminded the group that dues are due for 2000 (see also the separate item on this topic elsewhere in this issue). He indicated that we need to start using the national web site to find out more about resources available to partnerships. The address for the web site is www.partners.net.

Several other reports were made and are summarized as follows:

- **Phil Serafini** showed the progress that had been made on the display board. There will be further improvements made soon.
- **Margaret Clark**, **Mary Anne Sennett**, and **Thecia Taylor** reported on the women in politics special project and indicated that nine women are scheduled to come to the U.S. in April, visiting all three of the Bolivian partnerships. They will focus on "Freedom to Associate."
- **Phil Serafini** indicated that we still have the potential to send from 12 to 15 people to Bolivia under the Farmer to Farmer program during the current year. The next traveler will be **Chuck West** from the Department of Crops, Soils, and Environmental Sciences (Agronomy), from the Fayetteville campus.
- **Kay Kraeft** reminded the group that October will be Hispanic month and asked for suggestions to note this event. Kay indicated that she will step down as Chair of the Culture Committee as soon as a replacement can be found. Phil used the occasion of her report to present her with a plaque thanking her for her service as our President the last two years.
- **Mary Anne Sennett** is investigating possible funding for programs studying domestic violence as part of her work in Families in Development.
- Our committee structures were again discussed and **Bob Frans** reminded us that the national committee structures were presented in the September, 1999 issue of *Direcciones*. **Bob Reilly** is to work with an ad hoc committee to re-structure our committees and to suggest appropriate amendments to the Constitution.

International Convention

The International Convention was held in Mexico City from November 18 to 21, 1999. Attending from our partnership were **Kay Kraeft**, **Thecia Taylor**, and **Sue Heily**. The theme of the meeting was "Celebrating 35 Years of Volunteerism." The emphasis was on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), such as Partners of the Americas. Working sessions were devoted to:

- Deliberation for Citizen Participation
- Mobilizing Citizens for Community Action
- Social Responsibility
- Advocacy
- Volunteer Management

Other sessions discussed Partners involvement in Citizen Participation, the Environment, Health and Education and Culture. The keynote speaker was the Ambassador to Mexico, Ambassador **Jeffery Davidow**. **Manuel Arrango**, Philanthropist and founder of the Mexican Center for Philanthropy, spoke at the Volunteer of the Year Luncheon.

While we did not have representatives there from Santa Cruz, there were other Bolivians, including **Elena Daza de Jimenez** and **Paula D. Lujan Lopez** both from Cochabamba, and **Isabel Adriana de Ballivian**, **Cecilia A. de Cordova**, and **Blanca Laguna de Vera** and **Juan Vera**, all from La Paz.

A highlight of the meeting for our chapter was the award **Sue Heily** received for her project "Hope for the Special." Sue has put a lot of work into this project over the last two years, and from all reports, it has been quite successful. Congratulations, Sue!

Travels

There have been several trips made to Bolivia since our last issue of the newsletter. We will report on one of these in depth and the rest in abbreviated form.

Mark Robertson

The following is quoted directly from his report:

I departed on the afternoon of October 1, 1999 for my first visit to Bolivia. The day was warm and I was expecting tropical sun and climate when I arrived the following morning in Santa Cruz. Imagine my surprise to get off the plane and discover a Patagonian cold front had blown in from the south the night before. It was cloudy and cold and I had only packed summer clothes. Never assume!

I was unprepared for the flatness of the landscape when I first observed the Santa Cruz area flying in from La Paz. Like most people, I had always mentally visualized Bolivia as the Altiplano, even though for the past few years I had come to realize Oriental Bolivia is tropical. The countryside surrounding Santa Cruz is

under continual threat of deforestation and development. Only isolated pockets of the tropical forest remain in the area surrounding the City.

After clearing immigration, I was met by Sr. René Valdivia and Sr. Hermes Justiniano. I was delivered to the Hotel Yotaú which would be home for the next 2 weeks. After a couple of hours rest and time to freshen up, Hermes and his family met me and took me to their home for lunch. Hermes would be my main contact for the trip and I would spend a lot of time in the Justiniano home working on the project at hand. After lunch I was taken to both the Fundacion Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN) office and Airport property and introduced to the history of FAN, its mission and some of the current projects with which the organization is involved. FAN has grown from a grassroots organization of a few people meeting in someone's home contemplating the preservation and conservation of Bolivia, to a highly active organization of approximately 80 staff associated with many of the major international conservation organizations.

I observed the first production of tissue culture propagated indigenous Bolivian orchids and bromeliads. FAN plans to use their new laboratory facility to teach alternative agricultural opportunities to the local people. If successful, this facility will provide the means to help protect the rapidly disappearing environments and provide income for families.

After touring the FAN facility I visited the country home of one of Bolivia's leading sculptors where I enjoyed his hospitality and had the opportunity to experience his creativity. While in his home I was also introduced to the work of acclaimed artist Pedreza. Upon returning to Hermes home I had the opportunity to meet Gina Justiniano's Bible Study Group for tea and sweets. Everyone was interested in the project I was about to undertake.

Sunday found me headed to Amboro National Park area with stops in Bermejo, Samaipata and the pre-Inca archaeological site of El Fuerte. This day was to be my introduction to the beauty, richness and diversity of the flora, fauna and environments of the region. A picnic high on a ridge overlooking a mountain rimmed canyon below, allows me to see capuchin monkey, black hummingbirds, parrots, numerous other species of birds as well as the rare Soldier Macaw. The steep slopes were thick, with tree canopies full of many species of orchids, bromeliads and epiphytic cactus. Wildflowers and lianas were also numerous and the vermilion rock faced escarpments were a strong contrast to the barren limbs of the deciduous forest species and the luxuriant deep and bright greens of the many tree species in leaf. Giant Golden Bromeliads cascade from the many rock faces along the river and road banks. The overcast skies further enhanced the colors and many textures around me.

The drive from the Plaza Principal in Santa Cruz to El Fuerte makes me acutely aware of the poverty of the country and the journey out of town emphasizes the need for more planned and sustainable growth. The people of the country are flocking to Santa Cruz and the infrastructure cannot keep pace with the rapid

settlement of the region. The streets and highways are bustling with people moving up and down, and to and from the ribbons of asphalt and dirt roads connecting the countryside to the city.

There is great need to develop an understanding of the necessity to protect the resources and conserve the countryside. Unfortunately, the immediate needs of food and shelter outweigh the concept of environmental concerns. As I look around me, the streets and countryside are littered with the debris of plastic bags, cans, bottles and other discarded items and the hillsides are being cleared for pasture and cropland. The once clear flowing rivers now resemble the café on leche as they are laden with silt. Vegetation is being removed which would normally hold the soil in place and maintain the clarity of the streams. I am beginning to realize the enormity of the task of creating interest in conservation within a population which is most concerned with its immediate daily needs and has not yet had time to realize what the price of environmental neglect will mean to their future and children.

Still, I am encouraged to learn nearly 70% of the country remains undeveloped. Yet the very idea of so much land remaining makes the task of conserving more difficult to understand. I am reminded of home where we also are blessed with abundant natural beauty and resources and many believe these resources will last forever. We too are clearing and devaluing at a rapid rate with consequences not yet fully understood or realized.

Finally, 18 months from the time I first met Hermes Justiniano, Monday arrives and I begin the project which brought me to Santa Cruz. FAN has asked that I evaluate the existing Zoologico and Jardin Botanico, provide recommendations and draft a proposal on the future of these separate facilities. The next two weeks are full of meetings with representatives of FAN, local government representatives, administrators of the two facilities, scientists, city planners, financial consultants and other professionals as well as numerous visits to both sites. At the end of the two weeks I provided a written report of what I observed, analyzed and recommended for the future of the facilities. These recommendations are based upon the organizational history, politics, revenues, expenditures, long term goals, existing conditions, current and proposed land uses, and mission of the facilities. The following outcomes were discussed in more depth but have been abbreviated for this report:

1. Broaden the concept of the project from Zoological and Botanical to the concept of a Conservation Center to promote the mission of conservation, preservation, education, research and recreation related to the flora, fauna, environments and indigenous cultures of Bolivia with emphasis on the Chiquitano Region of Eastern Bolivia.

2. Consider reorganizing the operation from municipal control to private control by an organization such as FAN. Under current municipal control the facilities are at the whim of each newly elected official. Appointments are made as political favors and not

necessarily based upon ability. Also leadership is prone to change with each election. For the project to prosper a continuity in leadership committed to the mission and goals is necessary.

3. Reorganize the management structure to include a Board of Directors, Executive Director, Director of Zoological, Botanical and Educational Departments, and increase necessary technical staff to assure success.

4. Consolidate the facilities physically and administratively into one facility, located at the 186 hectare Garden Property which is primarily undeveloped.

5. Conduct thorough scientific inventories of the flora and fauna on the property to establish a baseline for future research related to the effect of extensive development around an isolated conservation area. This could allow for predicting potential results of urban development in other currently undeveloped areas. The proposed site is currently out of the City and surrounded by pasture. Projections indicate within 10 years the site will be completely engulfed by the City of Santa Cruz.

6. Develop professionally prepared master Plan for the Project Site and Program.

7. Develop new educational programming and coordinate efforts with local educational institutions at all grade levels. Develop environmental curriculum and use Conservation Center as a living laboratory.

8. Establish protected Conservation Area in Primary and Secondary Chiquitano Forest areas, minimally develop (trail and viewing areas only) and preserve in perpetuity.

9. After analysis of surrounding land values it was suggested no additional land be purchased for this project and that the 186 hectares could be developed and still maintain approximately 50% as undisturbed conservation area.

10. Further develop visitor amenity services and facilities such as gift shop, restaurant, etc.

11. Develop lodging option for environmental tours. This site allows for immediate access from Viru Viru Airport (15 minutes) for international travelers who typically fly all night before arriving in Santa Cruz. A small lodge would allow for rest to occur after lengthy travel and for an immediate introduction to the flora, fauna, environments and indigenous cultures of the region before setting out on the tours to surrounding parks and communities.

12. Establish simple and self contained living options for visiting researchers or student interns from abroad.

13. Develop 3 separate garden types including a Formal Garden, Informal Garden with some animals and a Natural Zoological Garden.

14. Develop new exhibit areas where animals are provided a natural setting with adequate behavioral enrichment to promote the well being of the animal.

15. Develop non-public areas to include Greenhouses and propagation areas for producing native plants to use in facility or sale in gift shop. Veterinary clinic, commissary, maintenance and

storage areas, composting facility and animal breeding areas.

16. Develop appropriate Master Plan for the redevelopment of the existing Zoo property (6.5 hectares) which will be vacated. Use this as an opportunity to develop appropriate alternatives which stress adequate densities and preserve open space. This could become a model for future development within the City. The present Zoo site is on Anillo Tercero and now in the heart of the City. Land value alone is estimated at \$7,000,000+ US.

17. Identify national and international funding sources. These should include corporate, conservation and foundation contacts.

18. Identify other collaborative opportunities to further enhance the mission of conservation, education and research.

19. Approach the Museum of Natural History of Santa Cruz and investigate the possibility of their purchasing adjacent property. It was learned the Museum is considering moving from its central city location which has no room for growth. The Museum has expressed interest in moving to the edge of the City in an area near the Garden Property. If the Museum (which includes the University Departments of Natural Sciences) located adjacent to the Conservation Center, a comprehensive plan could be developed for immediate and long range use with linkages to the Conservation Center utilizing the facility as part of the classroom experience. These, on the surface, appear to be a logical complement to each other and by being on adjoining property each can maintain their respective identity and independence yet benefit as neighbors in collaborative efforts.

20. Relate the Conservation Center to the preservation and management plan now underway for the Chiquitano Region.

21. Recommendations were also given concerning the process and suggested chronology events.

In addition to the creation of this report I had ample opportunity to meet with several other people in the Santa Cruz area. I presented a lecture to the Colegio de Arquitectura where I was able to present ideas on interpretive, recreational and environmental design, personal philosophy of the practice of landscape architecture and discuss the relationships of man and their environments. The practice of Landscape Architecture is limited in Bolivia and the ideas presented were well received. Before leaving, I am asked to visit the University on my next visit to meet with the Architecture students and would I consider a teaching a short course if time would allow. I gladly left the door open for this possibility.

The second weekend found me in a small Cessna headed to the Beni to a private ranch to connect more intimately to the natural environment of the region. The 1 ½ hour flight went smoothly yet the trip was discomfoting. The ground was barely visible as a result of the smoke which cloaked the entire area. The countryside is on fire as agriculture practice is to

burn the grasslands and forest underbrush.

Through the smoke large tracts of timber were observed to be cleared and the ground littered with tree trunks and stumps. Development is advancing at a rapid pace. While in Bolivia, I heard scientific research which indicated the annual rains are being held in check as a result of the excessive smoke. The carbon particles and heat are not allowing the rain to form. The rains are 4-5 weeks late in starting and the area is a giant dust bowl. A vicious cycle is in place. The Beni has yet to begin to be inundated with its annual replenishment of water to renew the environment.

While at the ranch I once again observe great diversity in birdlife such as Rheas with chicks, Storks, Herons, Ducks, Macaw, Parrot, South American Screamers and many others. I have Capybara with young approach within 2 meters of the boat in which I am riding and Caiman and Alligator are in every available water hole. I manage to fish for a few hours on Sunday morning. I doubt the fish have ever seen the lures presented to them prior to my arrival and young Marvin (from one of the ranch working families) is intrigued with the chartreuse, yellow, black and red spinners and baits I throw. The Benton attack with fury and I am rewarded with many struggles to land the fish in the small boat. Meanwhile Marvin is dropping cut meat on a hook over the side to catch Piranha. The morning's catch are well received at the lunch table.

Thursday night before I leave I have the opportunity to meet several of the Bolivian Partners as we dine at the Tennis Club of Santa Cruz. I present an abbreviated report of my activities and find supportive interest in the project in which I am involved. The Zoo has had little resources to make improvements and is in a sad state of disrepair. Everyone would like to see a better facility in which they can take pride.

All too soon the 2 weeks comes to an end and I must return home. I look forward to my return visit and future opportunities in Bolivia. FAN should be commended for their interest and support of such an ambitious project. A lot needs to be done but with the report in hand and dialogue begun the seed has been germinated. Proper care should be given while interest is high to assure the project to grow and prosper.

In conclusion, I would like to thank FAN for their invitation to visit and assist in this project and to express my appreciation to the Arkansas Partners for their support and allowing me to represent them on this visit. I look forward to future opportunities in what I expect will become a lifelong connection to the country and people of the lowland tropics of Oriental Bolivia.

(Editor's note: as a result of Mark's trip, he has developed a comprehensive proposal for the development of the Conservation Center for Santa Cruz. This proposal covers in much greater detail his various meetings and conferences held while he was there. If anyone would like to see his detailed proposal we're sure Mark would make it available, or you can request it from the Executive Director's office.)

Bob Frans

Bob traveled to Santa Cruz and was there from December 1 to December 14. The following is a summary of his activities:

At the request of Ing. **Miguel Cortez Escalante**, Professor of Range Management in Universidad Autonoma 'Gabriel Rene Moreno' (UAGRM) and East Bolivian representative for the Partners of Americas Farmer to Farmer (FTF) program, and in coordination with Mr. **Phil Serafini**, coordinator for FTF in Arkansas, Dr. **Robert Frans**, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Agronomy, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, traveled to Santa Cruz, Bolivia during the above-named period, for the purpose of consulting with weed scientists in Santa Cruz on weed management systems in soybean and rice grown in the area. His primary contact and facilitator for the trip was Ing. **Pablo Franco**, with the Center for Investigations in Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Santa Cruz. Ing. Franco is a graduate of UAGRM, receiving his Engineering Agronomist degree from that institution, and with a Masters of Science degree in Crop Protection from the University of Bristol and Long Ashton Research Center, Great Britain. The consultants' trip was carried out through trips to the major crop-producing areas surrounding Santa Cruz to observe cropping practices and weed management techniques being employed. Trips were made to the Yapacani and Okinawa areas north of Santa Cruz and to the cropping areas east of Santa Cruz. Timing of the trip was ideal for observing these practices since the planting season was just underway, as well as the major weed control practices being employed. In most of the trips, students, farm advisors and other representatives accompanied Dr. Frans and Ing. Franco in these observations. These observations, discussions, and meetings with agricultural experts from the area form the basis for the following report and conclusions drawn.

(Editor's note: a full report of these activities and conclusions drawn may be obtained from the Executive Director's office)

Sue Heily's award

As a part of Frans' travel, he was asked to carry the Spanish version of the award to the Santa Cruz chapter. Once there he learned he was to make a presentation to a press conference concerning the award. This happened, but it was in conjunction with a celebration of volunteer organizations working in the Santa Cruz area, and the formation of CEBOFIL (Centro Boliviano de Filantropia). A newly-published booklet was distributed at this meeting listing some 65 organizations at work there, and Partners is one of the 65. However, the presentation of Sue's award was the centerpiece of the evening!

Other travels

There have been other travels completed since the last issue of *Direcciones*. Three of these were also under the Farmer to Farmer program. Mr. **William**

Noel Gregory of Augusta AR traveled to Santa Cruz from November 11 to November 22. Both Mr. **John S. Harbison**, National Center for Agricultural Law, School of Law, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and Mr. **Phil Serafini** traveled to Santa Cruz in October, 1999. The purpose of their trips, also under Farmer to Farmer, was to review Bolivia's water laws and to draw up a draft water code for Bolivian policymakers. At the time of this writing, there reports were not available to the Editor. Those interested for more details should contact President Phil Serafini for these reports.

News from Washington

Women and politics

The Arkansas-Eastern Bolivia, North Carolina-Cochabamba and Utah-La Paz Partners combined efforts in a joint proposal aimed at strengthening cultural ties and building a stronger Bolivian democracy through women's leadership. Representatives of all nine Bolivia departments (states) will be selected locally for a 3 week program of seminars, hands on activities, observation of U.S. local and primary elections, and partnership visits in early 2000 aimed at promoting the democratic process in Bolivia.

(Editor's note: At this writing, three ladies from Eastern Bolivia are scheduled to be in Arkansas from April 15 to April 30. One is from Santa Cruz, one from Beni and one is from Pando. They will divide their time between Fayetteville and Little Rock - **Bettie Lu Lancaster** is coordinating their schedules. These are in addition to six other ladies from Bolivia who will be visiting their partnerships in North Carolina and Utah. During their visits, it is expected that these women will meet with many experts, participate in seminars, observe the electoral process, both live and in the media, and be actively involved in the areas of understanding the democratic process, running for an elected office, campaign financing, improving communications skill, developing a media strategy, leadership effectiveness and development of a written plan for accomplishing personal goals when returning to Bolivia. During the last week of their three-week stay, the group will assemble in Raleigh NC to share their experiences, participate in additional seminars, observe the NC primary elections and write a plan to follow when they return to Bolivia. We will write further on the visit to Arkansas in the next issue of *Direcciones*)

Arkansas-Eastern Bolivia Partners

The Arkansas-Eastern Bolivia Partners received a 1999 Award for Excellence for their work in the areas of special education and citizen participation. In the first year of the "Hope for the Special" project, six in-service seminars on methods for teaching people with disabilities were presented to over 180 persons. Goals for phase two of the program were to have an

equal number of the seminars lecturers from Arkansas and Bolivia and to share this model project with the North Carolina-Cochabamba, Bolivia Partners. Ten seminars were offered to 340 participants. Bolivia professionals will conduct the third phase of training. (These items are from the Partners newsletter. Although not named in the latter article, this project, of course, is the one initiated and carried out by **Sue Heily**)

From the March 2000 Resource Sheet

Farmer to Farmer

- Eligibility: Priority Partnerships are: U.S./Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, with limited activity in other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Goal: To improve economic opportunities in Latin American and the Caribbean by increasing food production and distribution, promoting better farm and marketing operations and conserving natural resources
- Resources: Funding for NORTH to SOUTH travel
- Contact: Anabella Bruch
ab@partners.poa.com
-
- *Reach Out/Farmer to Farmer*
- Eligibility: U.S. Chapters in Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Utah, Vermont and Wisconsin.
- Goal: To increase awareness of, and support for, international development in U.S. agricultural communities. Partners chapters participating in the 'Farmer to Farmer program are developing public outreach and education activities that feature Farmer to Farmer projects and volunteers.
- Resources: Participation in annual Farmer to Farmer/Reach Out training workshops and small grants for public outreach materials.
- Contact: Mary Beth Hastings:
mbh@partners.poa.com

Women's Legal Rights and Political Participation

- Eligibility: U.S.-Bolivia, Texas-Peru, and New Jersey-Haiti partnerships.
- Goal: to continue to support these partnerships' efforts to protect the legal rights of women in Latin America and the Caribbean and to increase their participation in political life.
- Resources: Two regional advocacy training and political leadership workshops, one in Bolivia and one in Haiti and for project assistance grants, Funding is available until September 2000.
- Contact: Mary Beth Hastings:
mbh@partners.poa.com

(Note: the above apply specifically to partnerships associated with Bolivia. There are other resources available to all partnerships, including: Family Planning, Education, Culture and Citizen Participation Program, and Teacher-in-Residence programs. Also there are special opportunities and activities available through foundation grants, for strengthening partnerships. Contact the Executive Director if you would like more details.)

Carolyn & Bill Hester
1407 Airpark Rd.
Wynne AR 72396-2507

Charles & Jo Hines
3009 Park Ave.
Ft. Smith AR 72903

Peggy & Mike Turbyfill
154 Peninsula Pt.
Hot Springs AR 71901

How about a trip to Bolivia?

As a result of the efforts of **Mark Robertson** and others, President **Phil Serafini** has been working on the possibility of providing a special trip to Bolivia, with emphasis on eco-tourism, and specifically visiting the National Park, Noel Kempf. With as few as 10 persons, the total cost per person would be around \$2,190. Not a bad price at all for a trip of this sort. So far, only preliminary details have been worked out - if you are interested in seeing some of the wild beauties of Bolivia, far from the beaten path, this might be for you! Contact Phil for more details. Time is flexible at this writing.

“Clean up” items

Maria Teresa Villanueva de Frans Foundation

While Frans was in Bolivia in December, he learned that all the legalities concerning this foundation had been completed. He was presented with a “Resolucion Prefectural” creating this foundation. It is now fully legal in Bolivia and exists to receive funds in support of students wishing to attend the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Funds may be donated directly to the Santa Cruz partnership or to a scholarship fund set up in the University of Arkansas Foundation. Contact the Executive Director for more details.

New members

It has been some time since we reported on new members and we now have several to record. Many of these have joined as a result of their LeadAR 8 experience of a year ago, and we certainly welcome them and are glad they have decided to become a part of Partners. These are:

Carol Corning
Rt 2, Box 71
Bee Branch AR 72013

Robert Hardin
P.O. Box 131
Pickens AR 71662

In addition to these LeadAR 8 folks, we are happy to welcome:

Jim & Barbara Hassell
328 S. Denver Ave.
Russellville AR 72801

Dues are due!!

Although we are late in getting out this first issue of *Direcciones* for 2000, we are still in great need for you to pay your dues! If you have not paid for this year, there is a handy invoice attached to this newsletter for your use. Remember that individual dues are only \$20 and family memberships are \$30. Several people have started contributing at the Sustaining Membership level of \$100. We would encourage you to consider this level as another demonstration of your commitment to the vital work that Partners does. Whatever level you select, please take care of this little matter ASAP. Thanks!!

Next Board Meeting

The Board is scheduled to meet next on April 29 in Russellville, on the Arkansas Tech campus. The meeting time, as usual, is from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. All Partners are welcome to attend, but it is very necessary for Board members and committee chairs to be there. An agenda will be available soon for this meeting