
DIRECCIONES

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

September, 1999

Message from the President

Dear Members, Board members and Friends,

This will undoubtedly be my last letter to you as President of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas. So I want to thank you for letting me serve as your president for the past two years. Our lives as Partners have been sources of wonderful times with each other, including projects, travel, and social events both North and South and most especially with our Southern guests, friends and hosts. Perhaps my greatest satisfaction has been to be involved in bringing about the meeting which we had this summer with the two Bolivian Board members, **René Valdivia** from Santa Cruz and **Willy Tanaka** from Trinidad, who came to meet with our Board and with the membership to become acquainted and to plan together for the future. Because of our enthusiastic mutual experiences and work together we anticipate a number of rewarding results.

At this time, I want to remind all of you of our Annual Meeting which will be held October 22 and 23 in Russellville with a Banquet on Friday night and a variety of fascinating travel and project presentations during the morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday. A brief Saturday schedule follows:

- 10:00 am - **Sue Heily** - Report on Hope for the Special
- 10:30 am - **Mary Anne Sennett** - Women's Issues
- 11:00 am - **Carol Corning** - Mini-LeadAR Seminar
- LUNCH
- 2:00 pm - **Phil Serafini** - Farmer to Farmer Report
- 2:30 pm - **Mark Robertson** - Environmental Initiatives
- 3:00 pm - **Kay Kraeft** - From POA International News
- 3:30 pm - OPEN BOARD MEETING
- 4:30 pm - Adjournment

We especially want to encourage everyone to attend and to welcome our newest members including those from the recent LeadAR Class 8 who returned from

Bolivia with ecstatic reports about their trips. Results of our Chapter elections will also be announced.

Details about Annual Meeting reservations, costs and directions to locations will be coming to you very soon from **Thecia Taylor** and **Don Thurman** who are in charge of the meeting.

We look forward to seeing each and every one of you in Russellville.

Sincerely,
Kay Kraeft, President

Joint Meeting

Perhaps the big news of this summer, and as also reported above, is the fact that our Board met with representatives of our counterparts from East Bolivia on July 31, 1999. Present from Bolivia were **Dr. René Valdivia**, President of Partners in Santa Cruz, and **Willie Tanaka**, who represented the group in Beni. Several members of the Arkansas partnership were present as well. The purpose of the joint meeting was to plan for the current and following years, to improve communications between North and South, and to better align our committee structures and work to make our joint efforts more efficient.

While both sides expressed gratitude in being able to have face-to-face communication, it seems that little else was discussed regarding improvement in communication for the future. It is gratifying to note that e-mail communication is gradually improving in East Bolivia, although we still need more e-mail addresses than are currently available.

Apparently, the group was unable to accomplish much in aligning committee structures (and, therefore, work responsibilities) between North and South. Suggestions were made to re-define committees in the Arkansas group. For example, a new Environmental Concerns committee is suggested (a definition of this proposed committee follows). However, there is no evidence that the two groups were able to identify joint committees other than traditional areas of concern. Ongoing issues in health were discussed by **Thecia Taylor**, who reported on developing interest in dental affairs consonant with Dr. Valdivia's interests (he is a dentist in Santa Cruz). A project he presented had to do with

prevention efforts for children, involving education of children, parents, and teachers. Paperwork is to be submitted to the Washington office on this project.. Thecia also reported on the efforts of new member **Charles Hines** to obtain medical equipment to be shipped to Bolivia. A listing of equipment needed and potentially useful will need to be obtained from our health counterparts in Bolivia. An audiometer, recently sent to Bolivia was discussed. Apparently, training is needed and options were discussed for providing this training.

Travels

Although we have not had many travels recently, we have had a couple and will report on them.

Mary Anne Sennett

(The following is her report, prepared for publication. It is edited slightly for inclusion in *Direcciones*)

Between May 9 and the early morning of May 21, I was in eastern Bolivia – mostly in Santa Cruz, but also in Trinidad, capital city of the northern province of Beni. I went there to work. I am the chair for a subcommittee called Family Life Education, which addresses issues surrounding the role of women in international development. My basic agenda was to determine how Partners could assist individuals and organizations working toward the advancement of the civil and human rights of Bolivian women.

I had various expectations of Bolivia, but they entailed more than feeling compromised and guilty when I passed the outstretched hands of men, women and children, begging; they entailed more than reflecting again on life and how one person ends up in degradation and another in splendor. I *expected* to become at least a little acquainted with the cultures and the people of Bolivia. I say “cultures” because, aside from those configured by poverty and affluence, there are the cultures of the descendants of ancient indigenous peoples – the Quechua and Aymara, descendants of that country’s once-colonial rulers – the Spanish, and the *mezcla* of the two. Contrast also characterizes the geography of Bolivia: from the dizzying heights of La Paz and the high arid plane of the Altiplano to the flats of Santa Cruz and the tropics of Beni; from high desert plateaus and Lake Titicaca, the world’s highest lake, to the lagoons of Trinidad with their exotic flora and fauna. I expected to get lost in the wonder that is Bolivia.

That happened, but not in any way I would have imagined.

In a bit over 10 days, I visited almost 20 institutes, associations, clinics, hospitals, day-care centers, women’s clubs – all concerned with the welfare of women and children. In most cases these were run by a bare-bones staff, supported by a cadre of volunteer workers – generally women themselves were sometimes living on the barest of incomes, but who in their incredible display of commitment, dedicated long hours, energy, and creativity to help sustain and enhance those even less

fortunate than themselves. I met strong, determined women, whose faces and voices reflected their strength and determination, and I was moved often to awe-inspired silence as I listened to them describe their work and the circumstance in which they fought to accomplish it, by and large unsupported by the powers that be.

I am not sure when I decided I had to return to Bolivia – to Trinidad and Santa Cruz. It may have been in the midst of a meeting with the very dedicated **Dr. Mary Luz Almendros** as we toured the hospital in which she serves as both chief administrator and gynaecologist; when I saw the young Bolivian man carrying his son over his left shoulder, while balancing on his right, so gently, almost impossibly the cumbersome equipment that supported the intravenous fluid feeding into his son’s tiny arm. He was calming, comforting, supporting his son as he walked – back and forth – the length of the upper floor veranda.

I may have determined I had to come back to Bolivia when I sat with some 30 women in a meeting of the Federacion de Clubes de Madres (Federation of Mothers’ Clubs). Each of these women represented an associated “Club,” organized in and around Santa Cruz, for the purpose of providing support across a great span of human needs for emotional and financial security. They come together and forge an indomitable force. These women – individually and in their alliance, through their projects and activities – are challenging a centuries-old and institutionalized element of much of Latin American – that of *machismo*.

This cultural Goliath creates and defines the mutually debilitating reality of male-female interactions and permeates every aspect of those societies that give it lodging and offer succor. Machismo is manifested in many ways, but none more destructive than on the level of domestic violence, a social ill that has high priority in the work of the Clubes de Madres. Operating largely in a vacuum, devoid of even minimal support for their efforts, the women who constitute these clubs have developed a variety of projects to generate an income for their respective clubs as well as for themselves: they are trying to market a nutritive powder made largely of soya mixed with other grains, used to make a nutritious drink and sauces; they are weaving hammocks, tapestries, hand-painting tablecloths, runners, and napkins. Their work is beautiful, finely crafted. They labor for love – of their families and of themselves. Their labor is their weapon – against the tyranny of poverty and the hard fist that strikes their sister, their mother, their friend, their daughter for the reason that it is simply tradition to be abused. They need such minor inputs: the money for the licensing stamp from the Bolivian government in order to market the powder; a sewing machine, a commercial oven in which to roast the grain.

But now – reflecting once again, I think I decided to be again on Bolivian soil because of the male gynaecologist. I met him in the afternoon of my arrival in this small town of Trinidad, in the Beni, a place pleasantly reminiscent of a set for a western movie.

My hostess, the lovely **Roxana “Roxie” Rivera**, the

Partners' representative in Trinidad, had met me that morning with an uncertain smile – hoping I was the one described to her on the phone the day before: “She will be the gringa with the very short hair cut.” (This I was later told over the coffee she served as soon as I had put my bags in my room – *her* room actually – for she had given me *her own*). My Spanish is poor, but Roxie's English was worse. I felt better about this fact perhaps than I should have – but it was because in Santa Cruz everyone had had to accommodate *me* – their English being superior to my Spanish. After coffee, she took me to a clinic that specializes in family planning and reproductive health. **Dr. Rodolfo Ruiz Suarez** looked at me at approximately 2:00 in the afternoon on May 14th, and said, “Why don't you come here and work with us? Help us.” His tone was full of dignity and at the same time supplicating, and I was reminded of the strength true gentleness commands.

I wanted to look away, but knew I couldn't. So I held his gaze in my own and asked, “But what can I do?” It was an honest question, for I am not a medical professional, and I was filled with regret in that moment that I am only a teacher. To give life, to help secure life – how imperative! How gratifying! “You can help us learn how to do things the way the people in the United States do them. Important things like organizing and planning our work, keeping our records, organizing training for our staff. We need to know all of these things. The United States is a rich country, and we need to learn from you.” And I was pinned – like a butterfly to a piece of cardboard, and it was my voice I heard saying, “I will help. I don't know exactly how I will manage this, but I will help.” And his eyes were still there – clear, direct, unrelenting.

He looked at my business card, then back at me, and said, “I have your name and I have your face. I will keep these in my mind. Don't forget us.”

I looked about his examining room – immaculate but very much open to the natural elements, the only privacy for his patients a movable screen. In the summer, the tropical heat of Trinidad moves in and settles, for there is no air conditioner. The open windows allow the dirt, the noise, the heat from the outside to enter without interference. The clinic need a typewriter to help keep legible records. With one set of instruments, with specula in only two sizes (compared to the four to five commonly used in the U.S.), he and a colleague share the 12-hour day the clinic is open and see an average of 3,000 patients a year in the small, modestly furnished examining room. In addition to the typewriter, they require another set of instruments. Some way I have to manage.

Yet, it isn't fair to say that my commitment started there. For by that time I had already visited the Republica de Callecruz and **Padre Jorge Toppel**. I had by that time already sat in an assembly of perhaps 80 children – the majority, aged between two and ten years old, children who are known in Bolivia as “street children.” They were called together to greet the visitors – me, my dedicated facilitator, **Juanita Cuellar Justiniano**, my hostess and devoted companion while I was in Santa Cruz, **Rosario de Arduz**, and the warm and generous Teresa. They sat

in horseshoe formation around the periphery of the assembly hall, clean and neatly groomed. Their faces displayed the care they were receiving. I remember thinking, “They know they have value.” So often before, in the countries I have traveled I have looked into the faces of children who spend much of their time in hard labor, begging, hungry, and physically abused. Their faces were not always the faces of children, but of deprived adults, strained, with little trace of the soft innocence that was their birthright.

I marvel at Father Jorge Toppel: he has found a way to realize the power he possesses to affect a profound and lasting change in the lives of many. At Callecruz children are not only cared for in a physical sense – they are nurtured. They are being educated in the usual sense of the word, but perhaps more importantly they are developing a nascent understanding with explosive potential; they are learning something quite revolutionary: that it is their right to be involved in decisions that directly affect their lives. As they develop emotionally and intellectually, they are *required* to participate in meetings and to help with Father Toppel and other adult personnel to plan for the changes that are involved in Callecruz' development – from planning the landscaping to determining the day-to-day scheduling of activities. At present there are 30 children in residence at Callecruz. Father Toppel wants to expand the facilities to, one day, accommodate 130. He requires more dormitory space, soap and towels, clothing, blankets, cots money for food – the list is endless. In addition to providing for the children who actually live there, Callecruz provides a noon meal for many, many more. In 1997, one source estimated there were 4,000 street children in Santa Cruz alone.

Nearer the end of my time in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, I went to one of the several places – Casa de los Niños – where children come in shifts – from morning to the afternoon – to eat a warm meal. More than a thousand children a day are fed at these *comedores* (eating places) at various locations in Santa Cruz. The volunteer worker at the comedor I visited told me one child can eat for an entire year for \$80. She stressed that with an ever-increasing need, the resources are constantly challenged and the project threatened. And I went to Villa Alegre, where health care workers address the needs of the families of the barrio that makes up its environment. As was true of most places I visited, much of the community outreach work is accomplished by women, mothers who commit their time and energy to strengthen the community in which they struggle against the legions of poverty – drugs, domestic violence, disease, and degradation. As part of the program at Villa Alegre, these women are being taught to make clothing. From their skills, they can clothe their families and also generate an income. They are in great need of more sewing machines.

As is true of all travelers, I am unable to put on paper the whole of my experience, partially because I am unable to capture it, but more because I am unable to comprehend myself all that happened to me in Bolivia, and how it is that I feel again transformed. How is it that I no longer represent only *my* family, *my* community, *my*

country. Now, I also speak with the voice of a certain Bolivian and say, "Don't forget *us* – Help *us*."
(A detailed copy of this report is on file in the Executive Director's office)

Sue Heily

Sue's report on her recent trip to Bolivia is as follows:

The travel dates for this second stage of the Hope for the Special were 6/10/99-7/4/99. The purpose and activities were to offer a total of 10 special education seminars in Santa Cruz, Trinidad and Cochabamba with a total attendance for the three cities of 340 persons. There was one seminar beyond these which didn't even begin to address the overflow of calls for admissions after a live interview broadcast in Santa Cruz.

The participants were parents, teachers and professionals representing 50 institutions in 3 Bolivian cities. They were trained in the need and type of early intervention for Downs children, a method of teaching health, hygiene, and self esteem to special needs children and methods and techniques of presenting language and mathematics to special needs children.

Secondly, with the help of USIS three institutions were provided with all the materials to put into effect the method of teaching health, hygiene, and self esteem: PREEFA in Santa Cruz, La Escuela Especial in Trinidad and Avanza in Cochabamba. Finally with the help of the 1st Presbyterian Church, La Escuela Especial in Trinidad was provided with a refrigerator to store medicines and food, teaching materials were provided for Kinder Ana Barbar, Pimaria Marmato Oyola and Primaria Agua Dulce - all of the Department of Santa Cruz.

The problems encountered were those of internal country cancellation of flights which caused jammed-together seminars. Future plans should allow arrival more than one day prior to seminar.

The expected long-term benefits are:

1. Bolivian Special Educators will be offering seminars next June for Bolivians in Santa Cruz and Trinidad. An available list of committee volunteers for next year was provided for each task and city.
2. As a result of the above Bolivian Special needs children will receive early intervention education services and more individualized education.
3. Cochabamba will provide a video tape of the presentations available to public schools as they attempt to incorporate special education students into their schools.

There have been several spin-offs from the trip. In Santa Cruz - implementation of Health and Hygiene classes for Special education students at PREEFA. In Trinidad - donation of a building by the Mayor for physiotherapy center, of physical therapy equipment by Crusillo of Trinidad and salary for 2 months of an assistant, donation of orthopedic equipment from Fusindo in Santa Cruz to the special ed. students in Trinidad. In Cochabamba - 140 families of special needs students have contacted the ASDC regarding early intervention for their Downs children. First Presbyterian Church has committed to do mission work in Eastern Bolivia next year.

It was interesting to meet with some of the

subcommittees and plan for the third stage of this project for next year. It was also interesting to sit in on the board meeting in Santa Cruz of Partners. Finally, I felt that my visit to Cochabamba had excellent results, but there was minimal POA participation. I saw the VP for 20 minutes on the morning of my seminar and **Elena Daza** for 15 minutes in the afternoon. There were no Partners at the seminar except my house mother **Maria Eugenia Jahn**. She opened her home to me and she was the only Partner that fed or transported me. The families of Downs children ASDC fed me and took care of all my needs for the 4 days in Cochabamba. After receiving no contact from Partners in Cochabamba after 3 days I asked for a meeting the day prior to my departure with the Partners group, but I had to cancel because I was suffering from altitude sickness and inflammation of my ear so I have little concept of the POA in Cochabamba.

(Ed. note) This is a request made as a result of Sue's trip to Bolivia. She asks the following: One of the projects that Partners of the Americas (Arkansas-East Bolivia) is attempting to respond to is a request from the Mayor of Agua Dulce to provide a central village water source in the school yard. From Arkansas, there is a construction worker donating his time and expertise to teach the villagers how to construct a water line and in-kind elements are promised by the villagers of Agua Dulce. **We need one last thing:** 60,000 to 80,000 frequent flyer miles donated for an American Airlines ticket by January for the U.S. volunteer. Would you be in a position to assist us: Please share this information with your friends and acquaintances.

(Ed.: this is a good way to put those unused miles to work for a worthy project. If you can do it, contact Sue directly at: sue_heily@hotmail.com or by regular mail at 990 Crosspoint, Conway AR 72032)

Mark Robertson

We realize he has not gone as yet (at least at the time this is being written), but we're pleased to announce that Mark's trip has been approved for October 1 through October 16. He will be working on a zoo project in Santa Cruz and with **Hermes Justiniano** on environmental problems. We expect to be able to provide a full report on his activities in the next issue.

Bob Frans

Bob traveled to Bolivia during the month of August. While not an official Partners trip, he was able to meet with some of our colleagues while in Santa Cruz, including **Max** and **Sonia Frydman**. They graciously arranged a dinner meeting with some of the key parents responsible for establishing the Maria Teresa Villanueva de Frans Foundation, supporting needy Bolivian students attending the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He was also able to meet with **Miguel Cortez** and **Phil Serafini** (who happened to be in Bolivia at the same time) to discuss affairs of Farmer to Farmer. His most gracious hosts were **Marialy** and **Oswaldo Justiniano**, who are parents of **Rodrigo Justiniano**, student at the University of Arkansas, and

who are also members of Partners in Santa Cruz. While in the country, Bob visited with family in La Paz, and with the Justiniano's, and visited the Missions in eastern Santa Cruz. He took with him his eldest granddaughter, who seemed to be fascinated with everything Bolivian!

From East Bolivia

For some time we have had a list of Officers and Committee Chairs from our partners in East Bolivia. We thought it might be of value to you to see this listing, especially as we are concerned about creating parallel structures and responsibilities. Here is the list:

Santa Cruz

PRESIDENT - **Dr. Renė Valdivia Borda**
1st VICE PRESIDENTS - **Miguel** and **Martha Cortez**
2nd VICE PRESIDENTS - **Max** and **Sonia Frydman**
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT - **Roxana Rivero**
SECRETARY - **Martha Ribera de Cortez**
TREASURER - **Rosario Anaya**
MEMBERSHIP - **Luis Valdéz Alba, Yolanda Cabrera,**
and **Jorge Jadauza**
CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL - **Dr. Ruben Dario Urey,**
Aida McKenney, and **Dr. Desireé Mostajo**
EDUCATION - **Hernán Zankiz Salvatierra**
YOUTH - **Sonia Suárez de Frydman**
WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT - **Juana Cuellar**
CULTURE - **Aida McKenney**
AGRICULTURE - **Miguel Cortéz**
ECOLOGY - **Hermes Justiniano**
MEDICINE - **José Carlos Camacho**
DENTISTRY - **René Valdivia Borda**
CIVIC EDUCATION - **Maria Eugenia Mosciaro**
COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS -
Carmina Fernandez de Saldaña and **Sandra**
Cossio de Feeney
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - **Richard Cotton**

Trinidad

PRESIDENT - **Roxana Rivero Chavez**
GENERAL SECRETARY - **Rosario Villarroel de**
Yabeta
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - **Maria Luz Yuja Gomez**
PAST PRESIDENT - **Victor Hugo Callaú Valcazar**
EDUCATION - YOUTH - SPORTS - **Willy Tanaka**
Nakawatase
WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT - **Maria del Carmen**
Iriarte de Alvarez and **Rosario Villarroel de**
Yabeta
CULTURE - **Arnaldo Lijeron Casanovas**
AGRICULTURE - **Pedro Mendoza Arias, Wilson**
Yabeta Melgar and **Fernando Loras Martinez**
MEDICINE - **Maria Luz Gomez, Vivian Rodal** and
Miguel Angel Alvarez Suarez
CIVIC EDUCATION - CITIZEN PARTICIPATION -
Roxana Rivero Chavez, Lourdes Velasco de
Caballero and **Nancy Cordova de Molina**

COMMUNICATION - **Victor Hugo Callaú Balcazar**
And **Arminda Vaca Videz**
REHABILITATION - **Teresa Flores de Ruiz** and
Gladys Ortega de Muñoz

(Ed. Note: we have addresses, telephone numbers, and some e-mail addresses for these folks in the Executive Director's office)

Meetings Coming Up!!

There are a couple of meetings coming up that you will want to know, and they are as follows:

Our state-wide Annual Meeting

As our President reported, this meeting has been scheduled for October 22 and 23, 1999. The venue is Russellville AR so that everyone will have an easy trip to get there. **Don Thurman** and **Thecia Taylor** have been responsible for the arrangements for the meeting, and **President Kay Kraeft** is busily arranging for an interesting program. The Holiday Inn will be the site of the meeting on Saturday. The banquet is Friday evening at the Italian Gardens, 315 W. Main. A cocktail hour will precede the banquet at the Holiday Inn. We may reserve rooms at the Inn for \$52/night up until October 15. Put this one on your calendar and plan to attend!

1999 International Convention

Although it's getting a little late for an early, dollar-saving registration, you can still get in on this interesting convention. It will be held November 18 to 20, 1999, at the Melia Mexico Reforma Hotel (formerly Crowne Plaza), in Mexico City Mexico. There are many interesting tours associated with the convention, and also airfare discounts from the U.S. to Mexico City. Full details on the convention can be found on the Partners web site (www.partners.net). We also have available registration forms through the Executive Director's office.

It should be noted that the Mexico City convention will be the last of the annual meetings. The POA Board has voted to cancel the year 2000 meeting and to have the international conventions only biennially (every other year). So the next convention after Mexico City will be in 2001 in Orlando FL.

New grant!

Bettie Lu Lancaster applied for and received a Farmer to Farmer/Reach Out Small Grant in the amount of \$1,000. The purpose of this grant is to set up a poster display of pictures and text illustrating and describing Farmer to Farmer activities in Bolivia. And it will be used at community functions throughout

Arkansas. This is a good way to publicize out activities and the work of Partners to interested persons outside our immediate Partners group. The money for this grant has been provided by USAID. Primarily, Bettie Lu needs pictures! Comb through your files to see if you have photographs that would be useful in depicting activities in Bolivia relating to agriculture. ALSO she would like suggestions and ideas as to where and when the display could be used. Already suggested are Fayetteville's Spring Fest and October Autumn Fest, Conway's Toad Suck Daz, and Little Rock's Riverfest. Please help Bettie Lu develop this project further - it will be good for all of us!

Interest in Environmental Concerns

Mark Robertson has developed a suggestion for a new action committee, which, as he visualizes it: "—is to be the umbrella under which all issues related to the environment are considered. Topics included but not limited to are: Conservation, Preservation, Sustainable Development and Planning, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Education and Eco-tourism."

This committee shall:

1. Focus on those issues and decisions which impact the quality of life and the environment in which we live. Care should be given to assure long-term consequences and benefits are examined rather than immediate gains only. Further consideration should be given to assure the recognition of the unique qualities and circumstances which exist within each distinct location including environmental, biological, financial, and cultural and that appropriate solutions are pursued to maintain those qualities.
2. Develop appropriate sub committees when necessary to deal with the diversity of topics.
3. Strive to achieve positive economic impact without detriment to the environment.
4. Promote initiatives which enhance the quality of the lives of the community without adverse ecological effects.
5. Promote restoration of degraded landscapes due to inappropriate development, agricultural enterprises, timber harvest and land clearing.
6. Promote sustainable developing and planning programs and initiatives to assure future development is undertaken considering all long-term impacts not just immediate and short-term financial gains.
7. Promote tourism strategies and programs which emphasize the importance of the unique qualities and circumstances of each location while maintaining or improving the overall quality of the environment being visited.
8. Promote and encourage two-way exchange of educational, technological and professional services and information.
9. Explore outside availability of funding and revenue sources.

This is an ambitious undertaking and we look forward to incorporating Mark's ideas into the overall committee structure of Partners. We are sure we will hear more of these developments upon Mark's return from Bolivia and his subsequent report to us.

35th Anniversary Poster

A new poster has been developed to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Partners organization. Check it out at the Partners web site (www.partners.net). You can order a reproduction of the poster as well as luggage tags and lapel pins. This is a new page on the web site and has an order form you can print out for ordering. While you're there, check out a new addition called PEOPLink. This looks like a great way to get in touch with lots of folks and to encourage exchange of indigenous items for sale. Perhaps this is a way we can get some economic activity going between Arkansas and East Bolivia. Interested anyone?

News via North Carolina

Sally Abbas is the Editor of the Cocha-lina Herald, a newsletter for the North Carolina-Cochabamba Partnership. She graciously provides your Editor a copy of this publication, which comes out bi-monthly. I find it always chock-full of interesting information and would like to share a couple items I have picked up from it recently. So, admitting my shameless plagiarization, here they are:

from the May-June issue, a letter from their, and our, former partnership rep, **Anabella Bruch**:

Dear friends,

During my last stay in Cochabamba, there was a question concerning access to Partners resources for this partnership. I've just received a report on use of resources for travel used by the 60 partnerships, and I'd like to share the following:

Cochabamba North Carolina is the one who best has utilized these resources and is in first place with a total of 24 trips - 5 under "Education and culture," 12 FTF, 5 Fellows X and 2 with Fellows IX >Only Honduras and Rio de Janeiro had a greater number of trips in education and culture with 7 each one.

>Utah Bolivia is in 10th place with 5 trips in education and culture, 6 in FTF, and 4 with Fellows for a total of 15 trips.

>Arkansas Bolivia also is in a good position, 17th, with 1 trip in education and culture, 7 in FTF, 2 with Fellows and one in Health for a total of 11.

>The mean among all the partnerships was 4 trips, with an average of 8.5.

>This report reflects trips that POA has supported, and I know through conversations that I've had with you

there have been many other exchanges financed through other means. The areas in which there are resources not used by the three Bolivian partnerships are Women's Health and Citizen Participation. I congratulate you for being so active and I hope that this year you can continue this level of activity. I will help in whatever ways I can.

Saludos, Anabella

and from their July-August issue, an editorial, written, I suspect, by Sally:

During the time I have been involved in Partners, and observing others, I see that those who are most active in the organization are those who get the most reward from it.

What puzzles me is why many NCPOA members will pay their dues, and perhaps read some of the newsletter, but not much more.

But there's so much one can do in Partners, so many fine experiences. Your officers and board members tend to take on multiple assignments – tasks which could be more widely distributed. Much as we try to involve more members, those who are ready at hand tend to be the ones who jump in.

There's a remedy for this. Just take one step forward, and let it be known you'd like to do something and we can help match an involvement to your interest. Don't be afraid it will take more than you can give – we're aware people have busy schedules, but you'll be delighted with the rewards of your participation!

GREAT words, Sally — many thanks!

New support system in POA

A memorandum, dated July 1, has come from our President, **Norman Brown**. This should be of interest to all of us and is quoted below:

"As you know, strengthening partnerships through an improved support system has been one of my priorities since I began with Partners in January. I have visited with leaders from close to half of all chapters throughout the hemisphere and have heard your ideas and suggestions.

"We are designing a communications system which will allow a Partners' volunteer to get the most appropriate person, as quickly as possible, to answer a question or respond to a request. To that end, as of August 1, we will have four staff members with the specific responsibility of providing membership support and service along with their other duties. These staff members will be your 'first line' of communication when you call or write to us.

"The membership service team will be comprised of:

Donna Gebicke - team leader
Gladys Camacho-Takacs
Salina Hattley
Carmen Sepassi

"The team has been selected based on their broad knowledge of Partners of the Americas, limited travel demands and areas of work.

"The areas of inquiry that should go directly to this team include:

- Chapter contact information
- General inquiries
- Partnership development questions
- Publications and materials
- Reimbursements
- Resource availability
- Travel
- Upcoming events

"Given the fact that we have fewer staff today, you will no longer have one staff person assigned to you Partnership. You will simply ask for Membership Services and Donna Gebicke or a member of her team will be happy to assist you. Please make copies of the attached contact sheet for you and other members.

"If the question or inquiry cannot be handled directly by a member of this team, they will refer you to a regional or program representative. (Ed. note: for us in the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partnership, that is **Martha Cecilia Villada** for all of South America).

"As in the past, program staff members are available for program and/or technical questions or consultancies:

Agriculture and the Environment	Anabella Bruch
Civil Society	Martha Cecilia Villada
Education and Culture	Dennis Shaw
Organizational and Partnership Development	Donna Gebicke
Public Education and Outreach	Polly Donaldson
Website Contact and Linkages/Communications	Peggy Carlson
Women and Families	Polly Donaldson

"We will be testing this program for the next six months. If there is a question and/or area, which you think we should be looking into please, send that along to me or Donna Gebicke (dg@partners.poa.com)"

(Ed. note: telephone numbers and e-mail addresses on all the above people are available in the Executive Director's office).

FINAL NOTE: Don't forget the meetings coming up!!