



DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas

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President's message

(Editor's note: The following is longer than the usual President's message, but is an account of President Wayne Swegle's trip to Santa Cruz following his attendance at the International Conference in Brazil. His detailed account should be of interest to anyone who has visited, or who contemplates visiting, Sant Cruz. His account follows.)

The main purpose of my trip to the East Bolivia (EB, Santa Cruz) partnership was to be come better (re)acquainted with the leadership, committee chairs, and support persons. Since I couldn't get travel authorization to make a personal visit to the Trinidad chapter, President Roxana Rivero (Roxana) flew to Santa Cruz to meet with me. We had an extended discussion of partnership relationships to the extent that time allowed. (Rosario Keele, AR Partner who was in Santa Cruz and Trinidad on a scholarship partnership visit served as interpreter.)

In both cases, I wanted to assess the potential for positive continuing and expanding program and project activities. I had several meetings with EB President Dr. Jorge Ibarregaray, (Jorge) alone, with Partners' leaders, and with city, department (state), and national officials for a thorough sharing of information about specific needs and opportunities, views, and suggestions. Since my hosts were Luis and Romina Torrico de Fernandez, both active members of the chapter (Romina, recently a practicing lawyer, is a leader in the Justice program), discussions were almost continuous and always productive.

I gained an understanding of the range of skills and

attributes of leaders of the chapter, as well as a thorough assessment of ways in which we can work together in a complementary relationship.

In my discussions with Roxana she apprised me well of Trinidad's principal activities, membership, and ideas on how we can continue and enrich our chapters' relationship. She said that the Trinidad chapter would like to have closer working relationships in the area of agriculture, health, and education and culture. Trinidad particularly needs help with rice production and fisheries. And members are looking forward to a partnership visit with Judy Selle, an AR chapter member who is an authority in dealing with domestic violence, pending Partners, Inc., travel grant funding.

As part of this overview of my activities, I should mention that, since I couldn't make a visit to La Paz for an update on the Justice program, Ramiro Orias, Subdirector, Programa Ciudadanos Trabajando por la Justicia, flew to Santa Cruz to meet with me. More on that later.

Introduction: I have become more aware of the importance of communication in pursuing Partners' activities. This awareness increased in my back-and-forth e-mails with Jorge as new facts emerged in discussing my then-upcoming visit. It was enhanced in exchanges with other partners' leaders at the Leadership Orientation at Ouro Preto, Brazil, where attendees stressed the importance of staying in touch and sharing ideas. The enhancement continued through subsequent visits with other leaders during the International Convention, and further discussions with Santa Cruz and Trinidad leaders. Many project and program ideas emerged that require further discussion and ideas for collaborating—in other words, communicating.

Further, communication has broader implications than just sending news and staying in touch. It is at the heart of building relationships: e-mails, blogs, newsletters, cell phones, land lines, inexpensive Skype, and other means of sharing information will

become more important in Partners' activities. But just having the facilities available is not enough unless we use them to actually communicate.

Beyond that, it can/should/will be used as a complementary adjunct in implementing projects and programs; and in helping meet needs and solving problems in inter-partnership, inter-committee, inter-whatever working together.

There may be unexplored uses of communication methods in working together to solve problems, short of a project requiring a partner chapter visit—in these times of funding challenges. One example: In my conversation with Roxana, she said that rice farmers there are having production problems. On our side, Arkansas is one of the top rice producing areas in the U.S. with top rice production scientists working at the Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center at Stuttgart, AR. We might think about trying to recruit someone, such as a retiree, to Partners' membership and, if s/he is willing, set up a web site to provide pertinent, immediate, relevant information for Trinidad rice producers and to answer their questions. Translation is a challenge, of course, as is finding someone willing to spend some retirement time in such an endeavor. But such an approach may be worth pursuing.

Also, Roxana said that fisheries in Trinidad are having problems. Interestingly, Sandra Hambrick, AR chapter delegate-at-large, worked at the fish farming research station at Stuttgart. She is willing to seek a retiree with whom we might develop such a communication set-up as described above for dealing with Trinidad's fisheries problems.

In short, the need for further communication emphases flow through many of my contact reports herein. Following is a day-by-day report of my activities. .

November 18. My/our work commenced at Jorge's home the night of my arrival. Along with Luis Fernandez, my host and active member of EB Partners, they provided rich information about the state of our partnership, the strengths and weaknesses of our AR relationship with EB, the results of the recent EB partnership leaders meeting, and suggestions of ways that we can strengthen our partnership. They expressed a real desire for better communication and a desire to search diligently for ways to support each other in projects and programs. Specifically mentioned were programs in

agriculture, health, and education and culture. Jorge is a member of the governing board of the Justice program in Bolivia and that project will be discussed later.

They reported that, at the recent EB chapter leadership meeting, Jorge was asked to stay on as president of the chapter for another year. He is a well-educated, intelligent man, who is well connected in the community and state—and will continue to serve the chapter well. The new vice president, Paula Saldaña, attended the University of Arkansas, (paying in-state tuition as arranged by the AR chapter). The EB chapter plans to emphasize recruiting of younger members and Paula will work to integrate them into the chapter's activities.

Jorge and Luis spoke highly of the work of Jo Ann Kaminsky and Budhi Kling on their recent trips in implementing education and culture projects—and they expressed a desire to continue the work Jo Ann and Budhi introduced.

A highlight of 19 November was a visit to Asociacion pro Arte y Cultura (Association of Art and Culture, APAC), managed by Cecilia Kenning. Ms. Kenning (Cecilia) started the association from scratch in 1994; the non-profit association has grown into an important organization in the cultural life of Santa Cruz and Bolivia. Some activities:

- * Cecilia established an editorial fund that enables APAC to collect and maintain a treasure trove of books, videos, other media, and memorabilia to preserve Bolivia's historical and cultural history and heritage.

- * Cecilia and APAC have developed two major cultural undertakings, presented on alternate years. One is the International Baroque Music Festival, the next of which will run from 24 April to 4 May, 2008. Concerts will be presented at the sites of Chiquitos missions in the state of Santa Cruz and in Trinidad. The missions were founded by Jesuits and have survived past government attempts to end their influence. Their rich history and the heritage passed down to young musicians make the festival internationally famous and widely attended. Steven Neuse, past president of our AR chapter, worked on a cultural trip to travel to Bolivia to tour the concert sites. But the details proved to be insurmountable and the idea was dropped.

On alternate years, APAC volunteers produce and present four major stage plays in cities around East Bolivia. The stage plays involve literally hundreds of actors and actresses, and attendant support people in

another culturally enlivening undertaking to enrich the lives of participants and citizens.

* Cecilia and APAC, with government and other support, are helping young orchestras to grow and, hopefully, develop into symphonies. In visiting about project possibilities for our two chapters, she said there are 20 young people in her orchestra(s) who need and deserve music instruction, perhaps from the Little Rock or other symphonies. There are no proper music schools to teach promising musicians. (She said that there is a similar need in the Beni orchestra.)

The AR POA chapter sent a member of the Little Rock Symphony orchestra to Santa Cruz a few years ago and she reported her experience at a board meeting. She might be an entree for us to start communicating regarding this situation: How many instructors would be needed? When? What experience needs to be transmitted? For how long? Is knowledge of Spanish essential?

Further, musicians and potential participants in the orchestras need used instruments, even if they require repair—Cecilia said excellent repair is available locally, inexpensively. Transport would be a challenge, even if the instruments could be collected. An information and communication need exists here, if we pursue.

On a related subject, Cecilia noted that there are two potential Santa Cruz chapter members who are interested in doing something in agriculture. They are brothers, Ernesto and Alejandro Mansilla. They were educated in the U.S and speak English. I told her we will ask Paul McLeod, the new chair of our agriculture committee, to communicate with EB to see what projects or activities we can develop.

November 20 featured a meeting discussing the Justice program, held at the Catholic University of Bolivia, of which Jorge is rector/president. The meeting was chaired by Jorge in his comfortable and roomy office. Ramino Orias, subdirector of Programa Ciudadanos Trabajando por la Justicia, (Citizens Working for Justice) flew down from La Paz to meet with me and discuss the EB chapter's involvement in a project to monitor judges' decisions in criminal cases. Also attending were Luis Fernandez, Romina Torrico de Fernandez, Rosario Keele, Aida McKinney, Sandy Hambrick, and Ramiro Arcienega, chief of the laws career at the university.

The project involves recruiting and training young lawyers in examining and reporting judges'

decisions in criminal, but not civil, cases. Partners of the Americas is the lead organization in the oversight program in Bolivia, with 64 other organizations cooperating. The project is funded by USAID. {The National Endowment for Democracy is an NGO (non-governmental organization) supporting the effort. The Endowment gets some funding by the US Congress.} The reports of the volunteers overseeing the judges' work are issued and made available to the public. Various media and other interested organizations can share the results through various communications tools and methods.

Similar programs exist in countries involved in the Andean Review, headquartered in Lima, Peru. Other countries pursuing similar projects include Peru, Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela. (I am, as are many people, particularly interested in this project because an independent judiciary is so critical to serving and preserving elements of democracy in these countries.)

After the meeting, I asked to visit alone with Ramiro Orias. I wanted to know what AR Partners can do to support the Justice program in Bolivia. Our chapter vice president and chair of our Democratic Initiatives Committee, George Vena, who is Assistant US District Attorney, has been to Bolivia to support the Justice initiative. He is fluent in Spanish and knowledgeable about the Bolivian justice system, and was extremely well received in his previous work in Bolivia. Ramiro indicated a need for further help from George, depending on the political situation in the country. We are communicating further information in this initiative.

Among activities on November 21 was an extensive visit with Oscar Vargas Ortiz, president of the Municipal Council of Santa Cruz. He described the challenges and opportunities in culture and education presented to the municipal council of the city--and we discussed ways in which the AR chapter might be helpful. He expressed an interest in getting ideas for the council in communicating with and serving citizens from an experienced and successful AR mayor or municipal official. Our AR chapter may want to try to find such a person, preferably one who understands and speaks Spanish, and communicate further as to what arrangements might be made.

November 22. As stated in my introduction, one of the main purposes of my trip was to become better acquainted with the leadership of the Santa Cruz and

Trinidad chapters. And since I couldn't get travel authorization to visit to the Trinidad chapter, President Roxana Rivero flew to Santa Cruz to meet with me on November 22. We had an extended discussion of partnership relationships. Rosario Keele, AR Partner who had already had been to Trinidad on a scholarship partnership visit, met with us and served as interpreter.

Roxana and I discussed Trinidad's principal activities, membership, and ideas on how we can continue and enrich our chapters' relationship. I gained an understanding of the range of skills and attributes of leaders of the chapter, as well as an assessment of ways in which we can work together in a complementary relationship.

She said that members of the Trinidad chapter would like to have closer working relationships in the areas of agriculture, health, and education and culture. Again, as discussed earlier, Trinidad particularly needs help with rice production and fisheries. And members are looking forward to a partnership visit with Judy Selle, an AR chapter member who is an authority in dealing with domestic violence and her colleague Aurora, (who will have her own organizational travel funding) who speaks Spanish. That travel grant application soon will be pending with Partners, Inc. (I think.)

November 23. My home visit with Romina Torrico and Luis Fernandez was fortuitous in many ways. One example: My busy agenda was constantly enlarged and expanded—logically, as new opportunities emerged. Due to personnel conditions, my visit to DIAKONIA was cancelled on this date. This gave me a chance for more in-depth discussions with my hosts, both of whom are deeply involved in Partners' projects, about which I wanted further information. Today afforded that opportunity.

Romina is in charge of the Santa Cruz project that trains legal volunteers to review judges' decisions in criminal cases. A recent law graduate and member of the bar, she was trained to lead the Santa Cruz project at the Justice program headquarters in La Paz. (Again, Jorge is on the governing board of the national project.)

My special interest in the Justice program flows from a visit to Santa Cruz several years ago to work with Luis and others on the Citizens Working for Justice project. Luis made an AR chapter follow-up home visit with me. We have become fast friends as well as dedicated partners concerned with the

Justice project. While Luis was in AR, George Vena, Assistant US District Attorney, arranged for him to sit in on an actual trial and Luis, a skilled videographer and public affairs professional, made two videos of personal interviews with George about the US Justice system. The videos were shown in Santa Cruz and elsewhere. One result was George's invitation to go to Bolivia to lecture and conference—successfully—with lawyers and judges. Another result is the possibility, which I discussed with Ramiro on Nov. 20, of further follow-up, depending on political developments.

November 24-25. I was invited to visit the vacation home of Jorge and esposa Marie Celia in Samaipata. It was another time to get a feel of the indigenous people and culture, amid the homes and activities of more affluent visitors, intermingled in a gentle atmosphere.

Even there, Partners' connections arose. During an evening visit to the gala opening of El Pueblito, a mountain resort, I heard the name of Miguel Cortez, long-time ex-president of EB Partners. I learned that he was in the hospital with cancer. I also learned that the prognosis was not favorable. I wanted to visit with former presidents of Partners to get their ideas, and was disappointed at Miguel's condition and the knowledge that I wouldn't have the benefit of his thoughts. (He and Thecia Taylor recruited me to go on my first Partners' visit of Santa Cruz to consult on the Farmer-to-Farmer program.) Little circles!

November 26. The government of Evo Morales was/is seeking more power and control in Bolivia. His supporters are causing problems for those who believe in democracy and the rule of law. During this period, the political situation weighed heavily on the minds of most Partners and others I met. A mob of Morales supporters went to Sucre and, in the confrontation, freed prisoners from the jail, damaged property, and several people were killed. The supporters were to demonstrate in Santa Cruz on this day, so most people, including me, stayed off the streets.

But that night's delightful dinner at Jorge's home was held as scheduled. It provided further opportunities to visit with more members of Partners, as well as a broad range of leaders of the Santa Cruz community.

November 27. The political situation continued to be unsettled and a general strike was called in Santa Cruz. But I had an opportunity to visit with former Partners' president Hermes Justiniano. He is a

talented and successful businessman and a recognized conservationist. He has played an important role in developing several national and municipal parks--and has raised funds to support peaceful developments in the huge Chiquitano region of the country.

We discussed ways in which AR and EB can support each other's goals. He is a very successful fund raiser for environment and conservation causes. He is in touch with Matt Clausen in case opportunities present themselves that each Partner organization can support.

Another outcome of the opportunity for further discussions with Luis: He is a skilled photographer with video or any other camera--and a professional public affairs authority. When I was in Santa Cruz, working with the Justice committee, Luis showed me an effective video and a related successful public awareness project promoting safe driving. Related, we talked about the problem of illegal immigration and the influx of workers, especially from Mexico--and problems it is causing with the larger community. There are aspects of the safe driving video and supporting elements of the campaign that might help in building understanding of the human aspects of the problem.

Luis gave me a copy of the video and a succinct proposal of a campaign that could put human faces and feelings on the situation. The goal would be to alleviate some of the relationship problems and build understanding. A company, such as Tyson, that needs large numbers of workers might support such a campaign and thus promote more positive understanding between the immigrant population and the larger community.

Some member of AR Partners might know someone who is a gate-keeper in a prospective company and could initiate communication on this project idea. There is a relatively new Mexican Counsel in Arkansas, who might like the idea and know of ways to implement it. Another idea.

Abrazos amigos,
Wayne

Editor's note: It may be worth commenting that, since the above fine report was written, there have been disastrous happenings in Bolivia, namely, the devastating floods in the eastern part of the country, primarily in the Beni. At last reports some 55 people had lost their lives and untold damage had

occurred, and is still happening. Trinidad, in particular, has been severely impacted to the point that thought is being given to re-locating parts of the city to higher ground. Undoubtedly, this will affect any proposed programs we might undertake as Partners in that part of East Bolivia. We will probably hear more concerning this situation in the near future.

Rosario's report

Rosario Keele also attended the international conference in Brazil, and as a result of her scholarship help, was able to also travel to Santa Cruz. The following is part of her report on activities while she was there. Because of her language capabilities and her knowledge of Santa Cruz, she was able to speak to many people during her stay. Her findings, too, are interesting and relevant to our future work. She writes:

Objectives:

1. To publicize the opportunities available for Bolivian students at the University of Arkansas, including scholastic aid and work study.
2. To generate interest in re-energizing the established fund (Maria Teresa de Frans) for the provision of scholarships in different areas, including technological and technical training.
3. To initiate a feasible plan for facilitating the sending of donated requested materials to Bolivia, particularly books and other instructional materials.
4. To ascertain possible project ideas for helping Bolivians...in health, economics, education, agriculture, and other areas.
5. To identify 6-10 University of Arkansas graduates who would consider joining the Arkansas Alumni Association with the prospect of forming the Ex-Alumnos de la Universidad de Arkansas (means Student graduated or Past-Students of UOA) based in Santa Cruz.
6. To explore the possibility of getting students involved in initiating a public health and environmental awareness campaign.

Activities:

Nov. 20. 9:30 to 11:00. Invited by Jorge

Ibernagaray to the Universidad Catolica San Pablo to visit and tour the campus with Aida McKenney. Nov. 20. 11:00 to 12:00 Meeting with Ramiro Orias, Partners of the America-Staff, based in La Paz, Bolivia, works directly with Justice Program. Ramiro gave us an update of the Program. Romina and Ramiro Arcienaga are based in Santa Cruz and they are monitoring the Justices there. Members Present: Jorge Ibarnegaray, Aida McKenney, Romina and Luis Fernandez, Ramiro Arcienaga, Wayne Swegle and Sandy.

This is a very intensive and a very complex program and still has lots deep subjects on the Justice System of the Indigenous and Orinary Pueblos in Bolivia that is difficult for people to understand because its laws apply in their own language and orally with nothing in writing like in our Civil Laws. They apply their laws and they decide how to punish their criminals within their communities.

Nov. 20 12:30 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. I was invited by Marilyn McKenney, past U.S. Consul to Santa Cruz, to participate at the International Women's Club-Meeting and Thanksgiving Party. They asked me to address the meeting. I explained the purpose of my visit to Ouro Preto, Brazil and to Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Attending members: 32 Location: Barrio Las Palmas, (My old neighborhood). Other visitors attending: Gina Justiniano. I invited Rhina Saenz, a Real State Agent, from the International Women's Club to join Partners. Later on, we welcomed Rhina as a new member of Partners in our meeting-dinner at the hotel Las Americas.

Nov. 21 6:00 p.m. thru 10:30 I attended Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes –“End of the Year School Program” at Casa de España Auditorium. Aida McKenney introduced me to the teachers and MC. The MC acknowledged me and thanked me during the opening act for being there representing Partners of the Americas. They had an audience of hundreds of parents and students, friends and visitors of Bellas Artes. The performance was excellent and I enjoyed it very much.

I spent lots of my time with Aida McKenney and she is dedicated totally to the Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes. You can find Aida at the Instituto from 2:00 to 6:30 Mon. thru Fri, she is the Executive Director, I visited the Instituto and met all the Directors, teachers and some of the students, I was very impressed with Aida's total dedication and attitude to the Arts. She speaks of the people at

ISBA very highly, with consideration and in high regard and we are very fortunate to have someone as Aida as a Partner. Aida sent her proposal in writing with ideas of ways to collaborate as future projects of Education with Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes. I presented the proposal to Margaret Clark, Wayne and the Board for review on our 1/9/08 Board Meeting in Russellville, AR.

11:00 p.m. After the program, we went to Dinner downtown with some of the teachers from Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes. I was invited by Aida McKenney. She introduced me to Marcelo Arauz, Executive Director of APAC. Marcelo is the force behind APAC (Asociacion Pro-Arte y Cultura), bringing and sponsoring renown performers to Santa Cruz, the city that is recognized as the center for Cultural Performances in Bolivia. He is also a Promoter and Pioneer of the Misiones Jesuitas in Chiquitos, Baroque Music and Pro-Turism for the Region.

Nov. 22 3:00 p.m. Meeting with Roxana Rivero & Wayne Swegle at Las Cazuelas. Roxana stated that because of the local economy, people are willing to do and try new things in order to make some money, so some people wanted to plant new crops and they wanted to try planting rice in Beni and they did, but since they jumped into it without knowing much about rice growing, they suffered huge losses. .

After the National Agrarian Reform was signed into law in 1953, and after the Panamerican Road - 310 kilometers, all weather highway (Carretera Cochabamba-Santa Cruz), was built and finished, Santa Cruz was the most important area for settlement, with a little over one third of the total acreage of the country, about 91 million acres, it has fertile land and good tropical climate and grows EXPORTABLE quantities of sugar and RICE.

The government at that time, in order to speed up the colonization process, gave away parcels of land not only to the Bolivian Indians from the highlands of La Paz, Potosi, Oruro and the Veterans of the Chaco War but also to the Japanese from Okinawa, Paraguayan and Canadian Menonite colonies. The government gave the Japanese one hundred forty thousands acres in 3 different places. Each family received one hundred twenty five acres. The Okinawan colonizers or first group of immigrants to Bolivia, were the first to get there in 1955. They have colonia San Juan, plus two other colonies. These Japanese immigrants have adopted well to Santa Cruz and better than other colonies. They

have their Spanish speaking schools and have gained the respect of the Bolivians and contributed to the local economies in the Department of Santa Cruz.

Also, I have to note that while all that was taking place, the United States, was in constant participant role of collaborator, with their technical assistance with land clearing, construction, building roads, agricultural, etc, and was very crucial to the development of Santa Cruz.

To date, Santa Cruz produces rice in EXPORT QUANTITIES, and they have their own Association of Rice Producers, but the heavy rains and floods are affecting their production.

Roxana also mentioned the need for an Exchange person that is currently involved with fishery in Beni, to travel to the states and be able to observe at a Hatchery-fish production-process. She said they would be interested in coming here to see how we raise fish here.

What I know is that they are trying to regulate fishing in Bolivia. They have a different variety of fish, like bagre, pacu and other tropical fish. They are trying to develop a commercial production for fish as an alternative for domestic consumption.

Nov. 23 9:00 to 12:00 Meeting and visit with the Directors of Colegio Juan Pablo II,

Teachers and Staff at the school: 8 people. Meeting with Maria Celia Sanabria de Ibarnegaray and other school officials. I was invited to a tour of the School and visit with the teachers.

Nov. 23 2:00 to 4:00 Meeting with Pablito Rojas, Colegio Marista - retired teacher and volunteer at La Mansion . Pablito is involved with Public and Community Service at La Mansion. One of their clients explained her job in the Mining Town of Potosi, as a manager working with the indigenous populations of the Altiplano. She was on her time off in Santa Cruz and ready to go back to Potosi.

Nov. 2 12:30 Lunch with the Rojas-Gutierrez Family. Pablito Rojas and Nena Gutierrez de Rojas, worked for USIS, and she visited the U.S.A., the White House and Boston several years ago. Pablito and his wife Nena are our newest members at Partners and joined us in the Partners Dinner at the Hotel Las Americas. Pablito went out of his way to take me to some of my appointments and places in his Jeep.

Nov. 23 4:10 Meeting with the Directors of Instituto Commercial Maria Goretti. Met with Lic. Hna. Purita Añez, Charito Arze and other

Educational Directors at their Institute. This institute celebrated their Anniversary in providing Profesional Education to the Students of Santa Cruz.

At 5:00 the 6 of us continued with our Meeting at Las Cazuelas Restaurant. They are also providing services to the community of Santa Cruz with programs meeting the needs at the Jail and with the Children of the Streets. This Institution, would be interested in having an Exchange Program with Partners or work with a project. Licenciada Hna. Purita Añez and Charito Arze are new members of Partners. They joined us in the Partners Dinnner at the Hotel Las Americas.

Nov. 24 Lunch at Aida McKenney's home. Visited with Aida concerning programs in Education.

Nov. 24 7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Meeting-Dinner of Mujeres of Accion Social, about 13 members present. Invited by Gaby Ortiz de Roden in Barrio Hamacas. These ladies are very active in several community services. We discussed educational opportunities for students and other topics of the day.

Nov. 25 11:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Meeting with Roxana and Aida McKenney at Hotel Cortez. We discussed the Exchange Programs currently in process and other subjects that affect our Chapter. Roxana explained to me how they do things in Beni. We discussed education. She is concerned about the different issues that affect the community. We discussed the project that we have going concerning Ms. Selle, who works with family violence and her upcoming trip to Beni.

Nov. 26 2:00 Visit to Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes. Visited with the Educational Director, English Teacher and others. Aida McKenney is the Executive Director and would like to have exchange programs and I will present those programs to our Board Meeting for consideration.

Nov. 26 7:00 to 12:00 Birthday Dinner at Jorge Ibarnegaray's home.

Nov. 27 11:00 a.m. Meeting with Dr. F. Luis Fernandez, Executive Director at PROSALUD at their Main Office. This organization is a model in Bolivia and also in South America serving the underserved population across different points in Bolivia serving with Medical, Pharmacy and other services. (See USAID reports in Bolivia with PROSALUD)

Nov. 27 Dr. Fernandez picked me up from the U.S. Consul's office and he gave me a tour of 4 Medical Centers in Santa Cruz. The Centers are strategically

located in the outskirts of the city, where the people need them the most.

. Their Centro Infantil of La Cuchilla, is the equivalent to our Early Education for Pre-School Children which is also a model in that field. The children spend in some cases 12 hours per day, while their mothers go to work in order to generate an income for their families, so that they can put food on their table. Also I feel that this center is providing support for the working women, children and their families. I observed during my visit to the PROSALUD center that these children are well cared. If PROSALUD did not meet this need in the community, the mothers would be forced to leave their children with other people or relatives in an unprotected setting, exposed or at risk to child abuse. The crime rate for violation of children is high in Santa Cruz, with a warning from ONU. .

Nov. 27- 3:00 p.m.4:15 Meeting at Consulado in Santa Cruz, with Rhea Borda, U.S. Consul in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Rhea is very interested in working with Partners of the Americas. She explained her project and the work that the Jessika Borda Foundation is doing helping the victims of crime. Rhea sent me her project via Military Plane from La Paz and I received her package with her project and other info on January 2nd, 2008

Nov. 27 7:00 – 11:00 p.m. Dinner - Fundraiser at Los Tajibos Hotel and Convention Center. Organized by the Committee of Volunteers of the CERNIQUEM Foundation for Niños Quemados. Visited with Siony G. de Alvarez, President of the Foundation concerning Niños Quemados. Also I had the opportunity to talk a few minutes with the Governor of Santa Cruz, Mr. Costas, at that meeting.

Nov. 28 No activities today. Demonstrations around town against the government.

Nov. 28 - Chapter Meeting. Modesto Saldana sent the Minutes of the meeting and I e-mailed it to Robert Frans for distribution. I also sent copy to Washington. I must mention that Gina Justiniano and Cecilia Kenning gave a report of the work they had done with the women at the Jail with Jo Ann Kaminsky and Budhi Kling. We should also mention and thank Ms. Karina McKenney, Language Teacher at the Universidad Evangelica in Santa Cruz for helping Partners in the translation of the work that Jo Ann and Budhi did while in Santa Cruz. We had a short visit with Mrs. Marcia Saucedo Cirbian Arteaga, Directora Educativa del Instituto Comercial, and Maria Goretti. Gaby

Monasterio de Molina, mother of Esteban Molina, graduated from UOA and was among the attendees.

Jorge and other members gave their reports and introduced 5 new members of Partners of the Americas. The Santa Cruz Chapter is alive and well and good things are happening there.

Nov. 29 9:00 a.m. Meeting with Hno. Luis Fernando Cabrero, Instituto Psicopedagógico. Hno. Cabrero explained the programs of Education that the instituto is offering in Santa Cruz and other campuses that they are working with. We talked about education in Bolivia, scholarships at UOA, and we discussed the Immigration of Bolivians to Spain. I commented that due to the close ties that Bolivia has with Spain and based on the need that Spain has for foreign workers at this time, they should explore the possibilities of writing and negotiating monthly or yearly quotas to issue working visas for Bolivians.

Nov. 29 10:00 – 12:15 a.m. Meeting at Centro Boliviano Americano. We visited with Dr. Gamarra, Dr. Valdivia, Ximena Valdivia and Aida McKenney.

Also, visiting at the Centro Boliviano were Hna. Pura Añez, Charito Arze, Marcia Saucedo, Students from Goretti Institute and 2 students of the Youth Ambassador Group.

Nov. 29 12:30 Lunch with the Rojas-Gutierrez Family. Pablito Rojas is a retired teacher from Colegio Marista and a volunteer at La Mansion. Nena Gutierrez de Rojas, worked for USIS, she visited the U.S.A., the White House and Boston several years ago. Pablito and his wife Nena are our newest members at Partners and joined us in the Partners Dinner at the Hotel Las Americas. Pablito provided transportation to some of my appointments and places in his vehicle.

Nov. 30 12:30 Lunch with Rosario Anaya, teacher at the Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes, I stayed at her home. Rosario was an Exchange Student here for the Suzuki Piano Classes.

Nov. 30 7:00-10:00 p.m. Meeting with Jorge Ibarnegaray, Aida McKenney, Rosario Anaya and I at Cine Center. Aidita, Rosario and I had a dinner. We discussed some of the upcoming projects that ISBA would like to do.

The 2008 Board

Here are members of your Board of Directors for 2008. **Wayne Swegle** has assumed the job as President of our chapter, as you know. **George Vena** is our new Vice President. **Thecia Taylor** (central AR) and **Margaret Clark** (NW AR) remain as Regional Vice Presidents. Our new Secretary is **Karla Bradley**, a school teacher in the Fayetteville area. **Paul Noland**, a long-time Partners member and retired UofA professor (animal husbandry) is Treasurer. **Steven Neuse** remains on the Board as Past President. **Nadine Spears, Leah Wilkinson, Rosario Keele, and Sandy Hambrick** are Directors-at-Large. **Bob Frans** is continuing as Executive Director and is Editor *Direcciones*.

Committee chairs continuing in their positions are: **Bill Millager**, Public Relations and Partnership Development; **Jo Ann Kaminsky**, Culture; and **Margaret Clark**, Education and Professional Development. New committee chairs are **Paul McLeod**, Agriculture (UofA entomologist who is on a mini-sabbatical in Central America and who will be in Bolivia later this year), **Mary Ann Spears**, Women and Families; and **George Vena**, Democratic Initiatives.

Board Meeting

The Board met January 19, 2008 in Russellville. These are some of the more pertinent actions and deliberations that day.

Treasurer's report

George Vena noted that we had approximately \$5,244 on hand. Financially, we seem to be in pretty good shape.

Regional Vice President's report

Margaret Clark reported that several meetings of the Northwest Arkansas group had been held, including one at Steve Neuse's home, and ones scheduled for Paul Noland's home, and Mary Ann Spear's home. Thecia Taylor noted a planned meeting with students attending the Clinton School of Public Service.

Several other items were discussed, including:

Youth Ambassador's update. A tentative date of April 17 to April 27 is contemplated

Margaret Clark and Judith Selle are working on a domestic violence project.

As a follow-up to Cynthis Lenk's program in Bolivia last year, a teacher-in-residence visit to Arkansas is being considered.

Interest has been expressed in health intervention programs, with a need for medical translators.

Financial requests for help with a youth choir has been received from Ricardo Estrada in La Paz. More discussion is needed.

The next meeting of the Board will be April 19 at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville.

Final notes

Perhaps this will suffice for this issue of the newsletter. Certainly the two long reports in this issue provide much stimulating and interesting accounts of happenings in East Bolivia.

Please check to make sure you have paid the 2008 dues. We will be reporting shortly on paid members as part of the re-chartering process now in progress. If you're unsure as to your dues status e-mail (rfrans@uark.edu) your Executive Director. Or you can write him at 1366 Altheimer Drive, Fayetteville AR 72704.

Thanks!