



DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas
Bob Frans, Ed., 1366 W. Altheimer Dr., Fayetteville AR 72704-6898
Phone 479-575-3978 or 443-5403, Fax 479-575-3975, rfrans@uark.edu
www.partners.net (national); www.uark.edu/misc/partners (Arkansas)

Spring 2006 (No. 45)

President's Message

The Arkansas Chapter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia POA Alliance has been active the last few months. In early March Bettie Lu Lancaster, Bob Frans, and I were in La Paz, Bolivia for a conference on the Judicial Reform program with which we are associated. We met with representatives from all the chapters La Paz-Utah, Cochabamba-North Carolina, and our partners in Santa Cruz and Trinidad. We Arkansans had a couple of free days and spent one traveling over the continental divide (15,000 feet—gasp!) to the Yungas and another on a jaunt to Copacabana on Lake Titicaca. We had a great time, except of course for the overnight flight to La Paz and a 21 hour return trip.

On May 12 we had our annual party honoring our Bolivian graduates from the University of Arkansas. Margaret Clark presented the graduates with a "Bluebird of Happiness" from the Terra Studios in



Ceci & Vivi Careaga, David Caballero at party

Durham.

About 60 people enjoyed fantastic barbecue and salteñas from a Bolivian couple now living in Rogers, and potluck from partners coming to the party.

Thanks go to our wonderful hosts, Mary Alice and Phil Serafini!



Diana Worthen and host Phil Serafini

We've heard from Santa Cruz that they'd like to have a piano tuner come down and help teach enough of the art to Cruceños to help keep their instruments in shape. We've located someone in the area who would be delighted to go and we're just waiting for a go ahead from Aida McKenny in Santa Cruz.

Steven M. Neuse

More items from Steven

New Board Member

Dr. Orlando Aguilar joins our board as chair of the Health and Wellness Committee. Dr Aguilar was born in La Paz, but has lived in the United States for the last couple of decades. He is a urologist, and as it turns out, has treated some of our partners. He is married and has three children. His parents Emilio and Violeta Aguilar also live in Rogers and were responsible for the salteñas reported above (they make them, along with cuñapes for a very reasonable price). We hope Dr Aguilar's coming on board will revive our medical exchanges with Santa Cruz and Trinidad.

2006 Annual Meetings

MARK YOUR CALENDERS! The Arkansas annual meeting this year will be held in Fayetteville on Friday and Saturday, October 27-28 and a board meeting on Sunday morning. Details will follow, but we can promise a great opportunity to meet our Bolivian students, a chance to learn about the tumultuous goings on in Bolivia and elsewhere in

Latin America and great food. We look forward to seeing you there.

MARK YOUR CALENDERS! The 2006 international partners meeting will be held in Belize City, Belize on November 16-18 With plenty of opportunity for side trips and adventures (scuba, Mayan ruins, etc.). Details will be forthcoming in a few weeks. We'd sure like to have a good representation at the meeting so give it some serious consideration.

New POA Program

The Board just got word of a new POA initiative. It is an exchange of high school principals between four Latin American countries including Bolivia. We are looking for principals (and maybe vice-principals) from Arkansas who can speak Spanish and who are willing to spend 10 days in the host country. We are also looking for Partners in Arkansas willing to host Bolivian principals. The details are still to come. We'll let you know when we know more.

(Editor's note: In conjunction with the above, there also is potential expansion of the Brazil Youth Ambassador Program to include Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Currently this program brings selected students to the U.S., touring, and attending meetings in Washington, then going to partners states for a live-in experience with host families with school-age youth. They might go to school in the Partner area and share their experiences from their homes in Latin America, etc. There is no confirmation on this program as yet).

Scholarships

The scholarship program at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville is well underway. We began the award program last year with a \$500 award to **Niñon**



Ninon Gamarra

Gamarra and this year's award goes to **Marisol Bedregal**. We hope to provide profiles on these students in the next issue of *Direcciones*. This scholarship program, funded entirely by volunteer contributions, is named in honor of Bob Frans' late wife, Maria Teresa, and is designed to assist needy Bolivian students during

their stay at the University. The Treasurer of our chapter, currently George Vena, can receive contributions and periodically deposit them with the University. If you would like to support this program, just send him a check! (3011 Echo Valley Drive, Little Rock AR 72227-3121) We hope that the program can, in the future, be extended to other institutions in the state as they obtain Bolivian students. Margaret Clark is Chair of the Scholarship Committee, with Jorge Mendoza and Bob Frans as members.

Have you paid your dues yet?

If not – it's time! Can't remember? Call 479-443-5403 or e-mail rfrans@uark.edu

Board meeting

The Board of Directors met in Russellville on April 15, 2006. There was good attendance from the Board and there were three visitors: **Dr. Orlando Aguilar Guzman**, physician from the Rogers area, **Niñon Gamarra**, student from the U of A and President of the Bolivian student organization there, IBO, and **Leonardo Mendoza**, son of Jorge and a student at UCA (he was able to attend for only a short time). All the visitors were warmly welcomed and President Neuse introduced Dr. Aguilar as the new Chair of the Health committee. This announcement received general and enthusiastic approval from the Board.

Niñon reported briefly on the activities of the IBO, student organization. They plan to bring a speaker from a Florida University to speak about Bolivia. During her presentation, plans for the forthcoming "asado" honoring graduating Bolivia students were discussed. It was noted that the Serafini's again offered to host this event .

Bill Millager reported on his work on the new Partners blog, indicating that this formed a means whereby persons could comment or respond to relevant topics, a difference from our website. Bill indicated that there had not been much activity thus far and urged all to take a look at it and to visualize how we might each make use of it. The address is: www.partners-intercom.blogspot.com .

Some preliminary plans regarding a Bolivian tour were discussed. Some options were circulated to the Board to lead the discussion, including visits to homes, planning a tour around local events in Bolivia and others. More details will be offered at a later date.

Other reports included discussions concerning the scholarship program (see above item), and fundraising. It was suggested that any efforts made to raise money might be tied to the scholarship program as well. Various items under the Culture committee were also discussed, including finding a piano tuner to send to Bolivia, art therapy, and paper-making, a project formerly conducted by **Jorge Mendoza**. **Kay Kraeft's** songs festival at UCA was also discussed.

Bettie Lu Lancaster further elaborated on the Bolivian Justice Program and the various projects stemming from the original grant. This is the final year of the project. The justice network in Bolivia has been instrumental in assisting with elections and improving voter participation. Work is underway to assist in a new constitutional assembly in Bolivia this summer. The group in Bolivia is applying for an extension to the original grant.

Some discussion has been held on forming an alumni association group in Bolivia. Two ladies, **Jackie Moyano** and **Patty Reznicek**, of La Paz and former U of A students, were contacted on the recent trip to La Paz referred to above. Both are quite enthusiastic about the prospect and eager to work towards that goal. There are obstacles to such a happening, though. Currently, the U of A Alumni Association requires 250 members to constitute an active chapter - may be a bit hard to find that many graduates in Bolivia. However, work will continue in getting a group going there.

Orlando Aguilar mentioned the association of Bolivian doctors in the United States. They work on programs of mutual interest in Bolivia and which might correspond to our concerns for health programs there.

The next meeting of the Board will be July 15, corresponding, inadvertently(!) with Thecia Taylor's birthday. We expect a great celebration - all members of Partners are always welcome at Board meetings.

The "Asado"

As noted above in Steven Neuse's Presidential Message, the annual "asado" or party, honoring Bolivian student graduates, was held at the Phil and Mary Alice Serafini residence on May 12, 2006. It



Hank Kaminsky,
Nadine Spears,
Eunice Noland &
Jeanine and
Steven Neuse -
feeding a baby?



Don Dombek &
Lyell Thompson

was a grand party enjoyed by all. The weather was perfect, the food was great and the fellowship outstanding. We need to do that again soon!

A Potential Bolivian Trip

As noted above, preliminary discussions regarding a trip to Bolivia were discussed at the April Board meeting. However, after more discussion after the Board meeting it was determined that we should hold off in our planning. This primarily, to allow more contacts with our Bolivian counterparts, to further develop a program, and to coordinate travel plans with Bolivian agencies. Steven Neuse is heading up this effort and will bring us further details as they develop. Right now, the plan is to develop a tour coinciding with the music festival taking place in East Bolivia every two years. More later.

Final notes

Friends - that's about it for now. We wish there was more to report, but not much seems to be going on right now. If you have items you would like to see in this newsletter, just let your editor know. He welcomes any help he can get - OR, if you would like to take on this task from him, he would welcome knowing about that too!

