



# DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas

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Summer 2006 (No. 46)

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## President's Message

We had a spirited Board meeting on July 15 even though we just had a quorum (it seems like it's harder to get people out for the summer meeting). Our discussions centered around the Annual meeting, a "tour" trip to Amazon Bolivia (see accompanying articles for more on both), the development of a fund raiser to help support our Bolivian students and projects not funded by the national office (more to come on this item) and pending projects.

The projects sound very exciting! One focuses on family abuse and therapeutic art, another on getting a piano tuner down to Santa Cruz to help train people in this art, a third on sending someone for choral music education, and the final project (led by Board member **Jorge Mendoza**) on paper making. I look forward to seeing all four come to fruition soon.

And I look forward to seeing all of you at our Annual meeting.

Steven Neuse

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## Some Good Bolivian Cooking!

Those of us at our last two Partners events in Fayetteville have had the great gustatory pleasure of eating some delicious homemade Bolivian Salteñas. We just wanted to let all of our partners where to get them. **Emilio** and **Violeta Aguilar** of Rogers (and also the parents of Board member Dr. **Orlando Aguilar**) can make up as many as you want at about \$1.30 each (they are pretty big) - they also do Cuñapes. You can get in touch with them at 479-246-7072 or e-mail at [hapi1116@ev1/net](mailto:hapi1116@ev1/net).

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## Annual Meeting

We're looking for a good turnout at our annual meeting the end of October. We want to showcase our wonderful Bolivian students and also delve into some important issues facing Bolivia and also talk some about the future of our chapter. *Please mark your calendar for October 27-28* for a great time in Fayetteville. We'll get the logistical specifics to you later., but here's a taste of what we're going to do. First the venue: the annual meeting will be held at the new Fayetteville Public Library on Saturday morning and early afternoon. Last year FPL won the Library Journal library of the year award and was also the recipient of other awards for its "green" design." In the evening we are trying to reserve the lodge at the Ozark Botanical Society for our dinner (with entertainment).

At the annual meeting we'll take care of business and also hear from well known Latin American Scholar **Jeff Ryan** who will discuss the prospects for Bolivia under President **Evo Morales** and the coming constitutional assembly. We also plan to have a session on the amazing Baroque music tradition of East Bolivia with a few samples of this indigenous and yet very European sound.

More to come through the mail.

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## A Trip to the Amazon for Baroque Music

In May 2008 the Arkansas POA is planning to sponsor a "tour" of about 10 days to East Bolivia to participate in the seventh biennial International Renaissance and American Baroque Music Festival. Strictly speaking, the tour is not a "tourist" event -

we see it in larger cultural and educational terms to include lectures, seminars and visits to museums. But we will plan lots of fun, too, including trips to the magnificent Santa Cruz sand dunes and the well known tropical zoo.

We'll be working on the project over the next 18 months and gradually be coming up with more specifics. If you have suggestions let us know. If you want to go, mark it on your calendar now!

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## Some personal notes

### Stephen Perry

Great work, Bob!

If any of the Partners want to visit me, I am now in Cairo. I left Buenos Aires for Cairo last September – I do miss Argentina and my regional work in Bolivia, lecturing on libraries and recent developments in technology in my role as USIA/State Department Officer.

My e-mail remains the same.

Hope to hear from Partners! Especially Bolivian students with an interest in Middle Eastern Architecture.

Best always.

### George and Jean Thatcher

This is to let you and the Partners know that we still read Direcciones and follow the activities of the Partners with great interest. Having lived in four other states since my time in Arkansas, I can attest to the fact that your organization is by far the most active and productive that I have seen. I even tried to start a chapter in West Texas, and they “stayed away in droves.” Now that we're in Florida I hope that we can at least attend your annual meeting and get our batteries recharged.

Keep up the great work in helping to bring us all closer.

All best wishes.

### Rosario Keele (excerpts)

You are doing a great job with the Newsletter and I enjoy reading it. If you do not care, I would like to share it with some friends that were in Bolivia for many years. One of them is Jimmie Williams in Louisiana; he was there working for Halliburton when they nationalized Gulf Oil. Also Raymond News in Oklahoma. It is good to hear good news from Partners of the Americas.

— I do not know if Dr. Aguilar is aware or not but the issue that Bolivian doctors have now is that they are resenting and aggravated with the 700 doctors that Fidel Castro and Chavez sent to the country in a permanent basis that the Bolivian government is financially supporting, although they deny it, at a time when they have unemployed Bolivian doctors that are working as taxi drivers or whatever job they can find to support their families. Evo Morales expects the Bolivian doctors to work for free. His ideology is not setting well with the public at this time. Bolivians are taking it as an invasion from Cuba and Venezuela and they want them out of the country. —

Since you know the McKenneys, I will have to share with you this little story. Marilyn and I used to do a lot of things together. When LAB started their only flight to the states, I said to Marilyn, why don't we start ordering the Miami Herald? So she got a hold of her sister-in-law in Florida and we ordered about 20 newspapers and every Sunday morning Marilyn and I would go pick up the papers and deliver them all around town to the enjoyment of the American families. — Back then, they did not have television. — Oh, the good old times!

### Raymond Barclay

I just wanted to let you know that I appreciate getting all your e-mails on Partners. I know I am out of the country most of the time, but I still have a deep appreciation for all things Bolivian. And maybe one of these days, I can return to Santa Cruz again. That was a wonderful experience

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## Citizens Working for Justice Program

### Kate Sonneland

We hope that this message finds you doing well. The Citizens Working for justice Program has lots of exciting news about its projects in support of civil society participation in the Bolivian justice system and the July elections for representatives to the constituent Assembly and Referendum on Departmental Autonomies. Please find attached the Ciudadanos Trabajando por la Justicia “Quarterly News”, our summary of program activities and accomplishments for April to June, 2006.

(A summary) During its fifteenth quarter of program activities (April, May, June 2006), *Ciudadanos*

*Trabajando por la Justicia* (CPTJ) focused on each of its four objectives in the justice realm and also implemented projects related to the following three electoral objectives: (1) Bolivian voters are educated and informed about all aspects of the electoral process and Constituent Assembly, (2) Bolivian political processes are more responsive and reflective of citizens' needs and priorities, and (3) Bolivia's political processes are more transparent and accessible. (Please let us know if you would like to see the full report)

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## More on the Baroque

### ***Bolivian Schoolchildren Learn to Play the Baroque Music the Jesuits Taught to Their Ancestors***

By Tyler Bridges

PORONGO, Bolivia, February 14 — When the string orchestra began to play beside the church altar and the youth choir joined in, it seemed as if they belonged in a European cathedral.

Instead, they were 30 children in shorts and sandals, and they were practicing Baroque music in a simple adobe church in a remote tropical village without any paved roads

Porongo is the 11th — and most recent — community in this region of eastern Bolivia to create a school of classical music for poor children who had never before picked up violins or had singing lessons.

Local officials say the music has given purpose and meaning to the lives of children who otherwise have few opportunities and has given the rural communities greater self-esteem.

#### **Music of ancestors**

But the nine-year-old effort is also helping to revive music written by the children's Indian ancestors, the Chiquitanos — themselves taught by Jesuit priests who held sway around these parts until the Spanish Crown expelled them some 250 years ago.

That musical tradition had long died out when a young Bolivian conductor named Rubén Darío Suárez Arana was invited in 1996 to undertake a

seemingly impossible task.

Suárez Arana was asked to teach the children in the indigenous town of Urubichá to play music and to sing, and have them ready to perform in three months at the inaugural festival of Baroque music to be held in recently restored churches in the one-time Jesuit mission towns of Concepción and San Javier.

The orchestra and choir of Urubichá"



Suárez Arana — who studied violin in Argentina and conducting in Venezuela — quickly sorted out which children would be best suited for which instrument and which were best suited to sing — usually those with less rhythm — and had them practice eight hours a day.

No one would confuse their sound with that of the Berlin Philharmonic, but the mere fact that they could perform won acclaim throughout the region.

Urubichá, an isolated farming community six hours north of Santa Cruz, Bolivia's second-largest city, has since become a veritable music factory.

Its orchestra and choir star at the festival of Baroque music that is now held every two years, and they have performed in France, Spain, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Venezuela and Peru. Urubichá now even features a small music shop that makes violins, violas and cellos.

And its success has prompted mayors of surrounding towns to ask Suárez Arana to create schools of music in their communities. He has obliged them, with several dozen older students from Urubichá serving as paid teachers. Suárez Arana, 33, is now president of a nonprofit group that oversees the music schools in the 11

communities. He has a \$250,000 budget this year, from European nonprofits and the Bolivian government, and says he enjoys the work.

"People often ask: 'What will those who play music do when they finish school?' " Suárez Arana said in an interview. "That's not the right question. We are teaching them not only music but also dignity and a sensitivity to culture that will be with them forever."

The string orchestra and choir in Porongo was founded only nine months ago and practices every day but Sunday in the church. It is the only organized group in a town of 2,000 residents that is accessible from Santa Cruz only by driving across a shallow river.

On a recent day, a group of boys was playing soccer barefoot on the grassy field in front of the church.

Inside, under Suárez Arana's direction, the young musicians first practiced an 18th-century piece discovered in 1970 by a Swiss architect while restoring one of the Jesuit churches in San Javier and Concepción.

Suárez Arana said an unknown Indian had undoubtedly composed the next piece they practiced — also recently discovered — because it featured both a minuet and an Indian dance known as a *chovena*.

### **Practice with vigor**

The nine string musicians and 16 members of the choir practiced with vigor. Suárez Arana frequently stopped them when he didn't like what he heard.

"I was curious at first," said 15-year-old María Estel Gutiérrez when asked why she took up the violin. "I discovered that I like it. Each piece has a message." "I feel proud to sing the music of my ancestors," said her 11-year-old brother, Juan Enrique, a member of the choir.

Diana Vilches, a 13-year-old singer, said other kids sometimes make fun of her and the others. "They

say, 'You're wasting your time doing that,' " she said. 'I tell them, 'We're not just learning music, we're also discovering our talent.' That shuts them up."

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## **Board meeting, 7-15-06**

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Reference was made to the Board meeting above. Here are a few more details for you

### **Treasurer's report**

**George Vena** reported that the general fund was somewhat depleted. It was decided that the separate categories of Reach Out, Democratic Initiatives and Adult Health (no longer active) be incorporated into the general fund.

### **Communications**

Some frustration was expressed concerning our inability to meaningfully communicate with our Sant Cruz counterparts regarding project planning. It was thought that the present political climate in Bolivia may have a bearing on this. We hope to learn more about this matter at our Annual Meeting.

## **Dues**

Frustration was expressed by the Executive Director over inability to collect dues. After much discussion, it was decided that the treasurer would endeavor to contact those members in arrears for 2006 and that we consider a direct invoice procedure in the future, starting with 2007.

## **The Newsletter**

The current Editor of the newsletter expressed some frustration in getting it out in a timely manner, and in finding suitable material to put in it. Several members pledged their help in assisting the Editor with such material.

## **Fund-raising**

Because our only source of local funds seems to be dues, the idea has been raised in the past concerning our under-taking a fund-raising effort. Several suggestions were made, centering on asking the Board members to pledge their financial support to such an effort. Future efforts will center on specific events to raise money, including Board member support.

## **Belize**

It was noted that the International Convention was forthcoming in Belize. Interested members are urged to consider registering for it. Registration procedures can be found on the Partners web site at: [www.partners.net](http://www.partners.net)

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## **A recent note from World Bank**

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### **The World Bank views Venezuela and Bolivia as a stumbling block**

Venezuela and Bolivia have resisted to the hemispheric trend towards better conditions for business development, and tried instead to put stumbling blocs to the capital intended to create jobs.

"Changes are possible only by means of reform," claimed a report issued by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Bank branch for private sector matters, as quoted by AP.

Based on the report entitled "Making Business 2007," major reforms in 2005-2006 included

lessening of regulations to organize companies and reduction of tax rates and paperwork for tax returns.

Venezuela, on the contrary, has added steps and delayed the process to record a property, closed its credit registry and extended to 16 additional days import procedures.

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## **And from *Prensa***

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### **Bolivia Denies Strike Crackdown**

La Paz, Sep 6 (Prensa Latina) The Bolivian government denied Wednesday it will crush the regional strike called for September 8, although it insisted on not using the protest with separatist ends.

Vice President Alvaro Garcia flatly rejected a journalistic version informing that Defense Minister Walker San Miguel had threatened with arresting opposition members and strikers.

Although he noted that the Executive respects the decision of those who want to lay down their tools, he expressed concern about the proposal, considered unjustifiable and rigged by Podemos, the main opposition group.

The Defense minister announced a military investigation and subsequent penal actions against the authors of ads promoting separatism in eastern Santa Cruz province and those in Tarija, Beni and Pando, where the protest will take place.

San Miguel, along with Armed Forces Chief Gen. Wilfredo Vargas, said the government guarantees that the army will defend integrity, sovereignty and territorial unity in Bolivia in the face of divisionism.

He added that those boosting secession will be tried at the Public Ministry for treason, insurrection and attacks against the Constitution and laws.

The protest is for the Constituent Assembly to discontinue the process to approve its rules, challenged by Podemos, which walked out on sessions

