



# DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas  
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## Outgoing President's Message

I want to thank everyone in POA and the board for the support the last two years. My first year was frustrating to me because we seemed to be spinning our wheels most of the time. The second year, with the exception of the failure to develop a Bolivian Baroque music festival tour next Spring, things moved along quite nicely. Five students coming from Bolivia for the Youth Ambassador Program, Cyndy Lenk going to Santa Cruz on the Visiting Teacher Program, and two successful education cultural projects in Santa Cruz provided a great lift for the program.

I hope you give our new President Wayne Swegle all the support you can and more. Won't be long until we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of partnership with our beloved friends in East Bolivia.

**Steven M. Neuse**

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## Incoming President's Message

Partners of the Americas are in a transition---actually transitions. Partners of the Americas, Inc., (POA Inc.) or Big Partners in Washington is adjusting to a new climate of reduced funding. Partners of the Americas-Arkansas-East Bolivia (POA AR-EB) is in a biennial transition, with a new president-elect and several new officers coming on board in January.

Our AR-EB transition will be less stressful than that of POA Inc. But our beloved and over-stressed editor, Bob Frans, asked Steven and me to write a bit as outgoing and incoming presidents. I don't have a lot to say because any transition involves evaluation of

where we are and where we want to be--and how we move towards our new destination. I don't anticipate a new destination involving any sharp, unexpected turns.

But I have been thinking about some things which I will mention. I solicit your counsel and advice, always bearing mind the admonition, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And it ain't broke.

1. Following that adage, I will strive to maintain the progressive, active stance of our outgoing president Steven Neuse. Again, our AR POA doesn't require fixing.

2. Some board members wanted a new location for our quarterly board meetings. Thecia Taylor volunteered to search. We'll be going back to the meeting area of the Arkansas Tech cafeteria, still meeting in Russellville, convenient for our NW and Central AR board members.

3. And Thecia reminded us that our meetings are called for the third Saturday of the month. So our 2008 meetings will be January 19, April 19, and July 19. The October annual meeting will be in Fayetteville or some place in NW Arkansas.

4. One concern is that we don't get to see enough of each other, sharing ideas, learning from each other, and taking advantage of available speakers and other resources from time to time. For non-board members, the main opportunity to get together is at our annual meeting. That is fine, but not sufficient. I will call on regional leaders in NW and Central AR to look for reasons to have constructive social meetings. Again, we need more good and positive reasons to join and be active in our POA.

5. A friend of mine asked a logical question, "Why should I join Partners?" Steve and I are going to work together to produce a publication that answers that question. It will include a membership application, which we hope will be well used.

6. Among activities already underway for 2008 are the Youth Ambassadors' visit, planning and implementing of which Margaret Clark has volunteered to undertake again. This program, financed by POA, Inc., with funds from the US Department of State, brings about a half dozen promising, but poor, Bolivian young people to AR for a mind-expanding experience.

Other programs include exchanges with our Partner chapter in Trinidad, Beni, another of Bolivia's states. More about them later. Margaret also is working on these with Roxana Rivero, Trinidad president. Our Rosario Keele will work on details with Roxana when she is in Trinidad for a Partnership visit following her trip to the POA international convention in Ouro Preto, Brazil in November.

POA, Inc., is not slackening its efforts to develop, fund, and implement new projects, and retaining existing ones. Rosario's trip to the international convention and to conduct a partnership visit to Trinidad and Santa Cruz, and my trip to the leadership orientation meeting and partnership visit to Santa Cruz is being sponsored by POA, Inc., with support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Citizen Exchanges, US Department of State.

Final note: Rosario, Steven, and I will return from the South with new and different ideas to share and implement. Watch Out!

## Wayne Swegle

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### Ark.-East Bolivia Partners Annual Meeting

The following is **Bill Millager's** compilation of our Annual Meeting in Little Rock:

#### Ambassador Cheek Steals the Show

The POA AR-EB Annual Meeting, Oct. 19-20, 2007, was exceptional. As a kick-off, **Thecia Taylor** hosted a sumptuous barbecue and mingle Friday evening at her home. And, as usual, the formal meeting on Saturday had a full program. This time it was ably assembled and compiled by President-elect **Wayne Swegle**.

The meeting was held in the impressive glass-walled Garden Room of the Clinton Presidential Library on

the Little Rock riverfront. After coffee and pastries, there were extensive Bolivian trip reports by **Jo Ann Kaminsky** and **Cindy Lenk**. Bolivian Student **Alejandro Paz** told of his background and future plans. **Rosario Keele** previewed her upcoming travels to Trinidad and Santa Cruz. Wayne Swegle outlined his plans for the Hemispheric Convention.

With technical help from **George Vena** and wireless-hotspot Internet, Bill Millager gave a short tutorial on our Partners blog and an update on its forthcoming promotion by Headquarters.

<http://partners-intercom.blogspot.com>

But the feature of the program, and an outstanding hit, was a presentation by Ambassador **James Cheek**. An Arkansas native, Cheek served as a career diplomat from 1961 to 1997. He served in Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Several of these posts were as Ambassador. He also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State under President Carter, with regional responsibilities.

Ambassador Cheek gave an historical survey of US diplomatic initiatives before and after World War II, with emphasis on Latin America. Before WWII, most of our diplomatic missions to LA were legations, not embassies. They were headed by ministers, not ambassadors. We did have lots of consulates, and commercial links. Most of the economies were state-controlled. Gunboat and dollar diplomacy were watchwords of the day.

During World War II, we depended on Latin America for production of vital minerals, and foodstuffs. In 1948, the Treaty of Rio and other Inter-American Agreements (circa 1948) established the Organization of American States (OAS). About that time, our missions were upgraded to embassies, and ambassadors were appointed. Hemispheric cooperation came into vogue, along with the Alliance for Progress (and Partners Programs) and USAID's handshake logo. Aid was targeted to be in exchange for structural reform, and more countries did develop democratic trappings.

In 1966, Ambassador Cheek witnessed the summit of hemispheric presidents at Punto del Este, Uruguay. He heard President Lyndon B. Johnson pledge to increase the total of US-LA development aid from



James Cheek

\$650 million to \$1 billion per year. Unfortunately, this pledge was not fulfilled, as Vietnam intervened, zapping international interests. And this heralded a long hiatus in consistent, substantial inter-American cooperation. Nowadays, drug eradication and crop substitution (bananas-to-nowhere) seem to be the touchstones of our policy. Of course the long-standing sanctions against Cuba have darkly colored the whole hemispheric picture.

Ambassador Cheek has not left the realm of diplomacy. He took part in the transition team before Clinton's inauguration. He also told of a six-hour post-dinner meeting with Hugo Chavez in 1997, before he had even formally launched his candidacy for President of Venezuela. Cheek was asked by interested parties to go to Caracas and meet with Chavez - to explore the man's views and convictions.

All of us Partners were enthralled at the clarity and scope of Ambassador Cheek's recollections. We also listened intently to his thoughts on how to work more productively with the Latin American countries. Concerning the Bolivian economy, Cheek believes that Chile could be encouraged to reach the sound and rational conclusion that giving up a substantial chunk of territory to Bolivia in exchange for a direct, dependable supply of natural gas. This would be a big win-win for both sides. I'm looking forward to hearing that Ambassador Cheek again plays a role on the next transition team.

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## Two travelers

We had two more travelers to Bolivia that could not be reported in the last issue, so we're including them here. **Jo Ann Kaminsky** and **Budhi Kling** were in Bolivia at approximately the same time, working on the same project of art therapy. Their trips were undertaken in late August to early September of this year.

### Here's Jo Ann's report (edited):

This is my third trip to Bolivia. In previous times I worked with students at Nur University to consult on a program using art to teach democratic initiatives to at-risk high school students. The first visit we created giant puppets and the second we create murals. My current visit to Santa Cruz Bolivia was to do two projects :

1) Lead a mask making workshop with artists,

students and art teachers, using the clay and *papier mache* method. The masks may be used for visual arts pieces, theater, dance, art class projects, carnivals and festivals.

2) Lead a therapeutic arts project in the women's prison. This workshop was called "Masks for Change" and used the same *papier mache* method but with more therapeutic interventions. The goal was to help the women look at their lives, decide what they wanted to work toward, and find ways to make changes, using drawing and mask making.

But I also visited with Nur students who are working on a different program through Nur, called Rediscovery Bolivia. I could see that the mural making and mask making techniques are still being used but now in these projects. The previous program had lost funding and had to fold, but the work continues.

I visited and conducted a small brainstorming session to create a mural at Bellas Artes, a private art school in Santa Cruz. I had consulted with the previous art teacher at this school in the past. The current teacher, Florinda attended the mask making workshop also.

The coordinator of my project was **Cecilia Kenning** of APAC. My mask workshop was conducted at the Kiosko Gallery. **Raquel Schwartz** was the project coordinator there. There were 15 attendees( 14 women and 1 man) to the 5 day workshop. Artists, dancers, teachers, and students attended. They were given a power-point presentation of my artwork and they leaned the process of sculpting in clay to make the original form, then overlaying *papier mache* that is painted and decorated to be a wearable mask.

**Sister Alexandra** gave permission for us to work with the women at the Palma Sola women's prison in Santa Cruz. The Catholic Church has a rehabilitation program there, teaching handcrafts and hair styling. The 5 teachers and all 41 of their students attended 6 sessions of 2.5hrs each . The group drew about their lives and processed their feelings and hopes. They worked with clay to create a mask that they then covered in *papier mache*, painted, decorated and wore in a process designed to help people look at their lives and start to see ways to make inner changes. Sister Alexandra said in all her 16 years she had not ever seen the women so happy, and she hopes that this process can be done again. They had a very meaningful experience. The process of mask making is simple and now the teachers and the

women know how and can make more, perhaps to sell as art pieces or for special events.

I was able to coordinate my efforts as I joined with **Budhi Kling**, art therapist to present a two evening seminar about art therapy at the Museo Del Art in Santa Cruz. During this seminar we provided an overview about art therapy, including two power-point presentations and two hands-on experiences. We also gave an introduction to our book that we have written to help shelter workers provide an art experience to their residents. All of the teachers from Palma Sola attended as well as some of the teachers from my mask class at Kiosko Gallery

My translator, Mrs **Sara Mansanilla**, attended the seminar as well and is preparing to offer the mask of Change project again to another group at Palma Sola, along with others who had taken the mask class and the art therapy seminar. They hope to form a team to lead these masks of change workshops with other at risk groups in Santa Cruz. The seminar was attended by 77 women and three men.

I had hoped that the prison project could continue and I was very pleased at the reception by everyone involved. I feel that the women that I worked with will continue and work on their issues with each other and the teachers now have some knowledge and skills that they didn't have previously. They were involved in creation of their own masks and so therefore have had the full experience as well. With the support of the establishment and volunteers in preparation I feel the project can continue.

#### **And Budhi's report (edited):**

While in Bolivia I worked with two individual agencies:

REMAR - A Christian organization originated in Spain that now works here in Santa Cruz. They have several homes, one for boys, another for girls, and a third for sexually abused and drug addict young women. Many come from damaged homes or are orphans, or street children. The couple that directs the home here is **Carmen Herrera** and her husband. They are wonderful. They are now looking for a home to take children with cancer that no longer can pay the hospital bills.

CIPTAS - The second refuge is an NGO foundation that was created by Dr. **Desiree Mostajo**, Ob-Gyn, who has been a VERY active member with the POA here, and has visited Arkansas, where she did a training in the POA Leadership Program. The refuge is called, Centro de Atencion y Prevencion de Abuso

Sexual. The Director of this center is **Veronica Inochea**.

At REMAR, I trained Carmen Herrera (site director) and two staff people. They had the opportunity to experience therapeutic art groups and their clients. For three hours per day, on four days, I worked with a group of twelve REMAR clients, young women trying to reclaim their lives from the street abuse, drugs and family violence. We completed several of the activities in the creativities and healing manual (Ed.: a manual developed and co-written by Budhi and Jo Ann), thereby demonstrating techniques and their effectiveness to staff trainees.

In my clinical opinion, both clients and staff experienced profound insights during the art experiences. They indicated verbally that these sessions were insightful, growthful and thought provoking. I observed graphic expressions that support these verbal observations. This is true for both REMAR and CIPTAS clients. Some young women said they had never made art, never painted.

At CIPTAS I trained eight staff members and worked with their eight clients, young girls who were court-ordered from their homes due to the presence of an abusing (sexually) father or other relative. These girls were in obvious psychological distress - depressed, anxious, fearful, or dissociative. They - like the clients at REMAR - responded with enthusiasm to the opportunities to express themselves artistically. Initially, somewhat more hesitant to open up, these girls were also able to make some therapeutic breakthroughs in the brief time we had together. One girl spoke for the first time since coming to CIPTAS. All the clients - at REMAR and CIPTAS - had experiences that increased self-understanding, and reinforced validation, acceptance, and a more internalized locus of control.

(Ed.: At this point in her report, Budhi describes a large art therapy workshop she co-led with Jo Ann. She continues:)

I experienced a strong sense of connection with this large group. The multi-cultural and bilingual setting was a powerful stimulus for all of us. Translation gave a pacing to introducing difficult material that I think was helpful.

Since each workshop participant received a copy of the manual, they all have a template to continue the work. Many expressed this intention. In addition, we increased an awareness in Santa Cruz of the power of

art as a healing tool. I think Santa Cruz now has a good foundation in this area, springing up from Jo Ann's two previous visits.

-----The host president (**Jorge Ibarnegaray**) entertained Jo Ann and me at his Samaipata home where we discussed the projects and hoped-for impact. The host chapter had a dinner meeting where the projects were introduced and had the opportunity to meet and talk with members. **Hermes Justiniano** made his office and staff available for technical assistance for my workshops and translation of the art therapy manual. **Gina Justiniano** headed up the translation project, envisioned the workshop and arranged all my agency contacts.

-----Long term benefits of my work will be to the Santa Cruz healing community and victims of sexual and domestic violence. The chapter has the satisfaction of having introduced a powerful medium for healing. Enough psychologists, social workers, therapists, nurses and care-givers attended the workshop, received the manual and indicated positive response that it is reasonable to expect that many will follow through in some way. I feel certain that there will be a therapeutic art initiative at both REMAR and CIPTAS, and that these agencies will incorporate the program or aspects of it in their curriculum.

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## Board Meeting

In conjunction with the Annual Meeting (reported above) the Board met at the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock on October 20, 2007. Following are several items of interest coming from that meeting:

### President's Report

President Neuse reported that there will be no international meeting in 2008 due to financial problems in Washington. Currently, an interim President is serving - no word is available on a search for a new President in Washington.

### Regional Reports

Thecia Taylor reported on the Annual Meeting and expressed hope that she will be able to host a Christmas party this year. Margaret Clark reported that she was continuing to organize social meetings for the Northwest Arkansas group.

## Youth Ambassadors

The success of the program this year was noted with thanks to Margaret Clark for her hard work in coordinating the effort. Partners will fund the program again next year and the hope was expressed that it be centered in the Little Rock area. A volunteer is needed to coordinate this effort. Hope was expressed that more advanced information be sent out for the next program.

## Executive Director Report

The Executive Director reported on distribution of *Direcciones*. It was agreed that e-mail distribution was working well. He commended Treasurer George Vena for mailing dues notices to the membership - this procedure is working well and will be continued. He asked for trip reports be copied to him for inclusion in the newsletter.

## Fund Raising

President Neuse reported on an art program that could be used by our organization to assist in raising funds. He has received positive comments on the program, and expressed hope that the student organization at the University of Arkansas would help in the project.

## Future Board Meetings

Some discussion was held regarding Board meetings in 2009. Incoming President Swegle later announced that the Board meetings for January, April, and July would be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> in each of these months. Since dis-satisfaction had been expressed for the past location, he decided to hold these meetings on the campus of Arkansas Tech University. Presumably, the Annual Meeting (and Board meeting) would be held in Northwest Arkansas in October. Further details will be announced for each meeting.

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## Note from the Thatchers

Hi Bob,

I just wanted you to know we haven't forgotten the Partners. I was hoping this might be the year we make an annual meeting, but it just wasn't to be. I'm teaching that weekend in Jacksonville.

In case anyone remembers us and would like a short update: I'm semi-retired from teaching at Texas Tech. I now serve as adjunct faculty for S. Illinois

Us's Workforce Education Development program, and I teach courses at their off-campus sites on various military installations. Jean is also a retired educator who does occasional teacher training workshops. We both enjoy biking, swimming and other fitness pursuits, and for now Florida fills the bill in that regard.

All success to the Partners!

George and Jean Thatcher

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## Dues

Outgoing Treasurer **George Vena** has done an outstanding job in keeping up with the financial affairs of our partnership. He initiated the policy of sending notices of dues statements which has helped immeasurably in their collection. All members should have received such a statement within the last month and many of you have responded. If you have not won't you dig out that statement and send it in with your check for 2008 dues? Thanks - that will be a big help! Note also any changes to your addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses - we like to keep up.

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## Addendum to President Swegle's report

This is a recent addition from Wayne Swegle while still in Santa Cruz and just prior to his returning home:

We are witnessing events that are critically important to Bolivia's future. Masses from the Altiplano invaded Sucre day before yesterday. The frightened police abandoned the city, the indigenistas turned prisoners loose from the jail, battles emerged, several people were killed, and anarchy resulted, which is what the government in La Paz wanted.

Yesterday the target was Santa Cruz and some other departamentos. We kept no appointments yesterday, at the request of our Partners' leaders. I am seeing Hermes today and a meeting tonight. Tomorrow is a general strike here, so we hole up again.

I hesitate to say what I feel is happening, but there was a gigantic meeting in support of Santa Cruz yesterday afternoon (our people went but I wasn't

invited). I feel Evo has overplayed his hand in seeking anarchy so he can have absolute power. We shall see and I am glad I was here to see history being made here. But, of course, the final results aren't in.

Saludos, mi amigo,

**Wayne**

In addition, Wayne sent the following account from a fellow attendee at the leadership conference he attended in Brazil:

Alison (McKellar) was one of my fellow Leadership Orientation students. She is from Florida, which has a partnership with Colombia, where she is now. She is a recent college grad and sharp as hell. I enjoyed her contributions to the orientation, although they were challenging to most of us old dudes, even PoA, Inc. folks.

Her account:

Dear Fellow Leadership Orientation Attendees,

I know I'm not the only one who felt energized and optimistic after spending the week sharing ideas and enthusiasm at the Partners Leadership Orientation and Convention. Now, I find myself wondering how we can possibly maintain this synergy and momentum from a distance, knowing that it will be impossible to communicate individually all each and every person we connected with. Even e-mail is not a realistic way to keep in touch with the literally hundreds of people in an organization that reaches over three continents.

The good news is that we have many tools at our disposition that are much more than e-mail. Let's face it Partners of the Americas, as an organization, is a little behind in terms of technology. Blogs, Facebook, Myspace, Podcasts, and Internet Groups are no longer just toys that teenagers use to waste time, but have become tools used by businesses, NGOs, and individuals to break down the barriers created by distance and communicate with each other.

Compared to the countless veterans of PoA, many of us are new to the organization, but right now, that may be our biggest asset. Partners of the Americas boasts the title of being the largest volunteer organization in the Western Hemisphere. We are a network of people dedicated to making a difference,

and almost every single one of us wants to do even more. How is it possible, then, that Partners has much higher administrative costs than many other NGOs?

There are many reasons, but one of the main reasons is that Washington staff are spread very thin, and don't have time to manage and organize each and every volunteer in the appropriate area. No other NGO has a network of volunteers like Partners, but it will be up to us to organize ourselves at the local, regional, and international level so that this network can reach its full potential.

During my conversations with many of you over the week, I committed to using my knowledge of web based communication technology to do two things:

1. Help find ways for all of us to communicate with greater ease.
2. Begin work on an online searchable project database.

Both of these things will take a long time to perfect, but that should not stop us from getting started right now.

I propose that we begin with two simple steps to be completed during the next seven days:

1. For all those who do not already have Skype. Go to [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) to download this free software and create an account that will allow us to communicate with our computers to have free telephone conversations anywhere in the world.
2. Visit [www.partners.net](http://www.partners.net) and click on "virtual rooms" located on the right side menu of the home page. Underneath the sign-in box, click "create an account" ... Here, you will be asked to enter your information. Once you have done this, I will be able to give you access to the area for Leadership Orientation Attendees".

Most importantly, when you log in for the first time.... at least write something, even just a sentence so that we can all see who has logged in.

I am in Colombia now, but will be doing my best to get work started on a project database while I'm here, so post some suggestions in the virtual room.

I hope everyone had a very safe trip home.... I personally missed my connection in Sao Paulo and was put up in a hotel for the night! Although quite tired, I was really happy the whole thing happened because I got to see a little more of Brazil.

Un abrazo para todos,

**Alison McKellar**

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## Editor's final notes

This issue of the newsletter got to be a bit longer than expected, but the reports from Jo Ann Kaminsky and Budhi Kling seemed particularly relevant. We're glad they represented our partnership so well in their art therapy work.

Wayne Swegle's accounts were written while he was still in Santa Cruz following the international conference in Brazil. He was literally "on the ground" during the recent unrest in the cities of Sucre and Santa Cruz. This is certainly a sad time in the affairs of Bolivia and we trust that the country will soon come to a peaceful conclusion of their differences. Your editor, as well as many others, literally has a foot in both the highland areas (represented by La Paz) and in the lowlands (represented by both Santa Cruz and Trinidad). It is painful to see yet another wave of regionalism sweeping the country as it seems to be doing at present.

As the Christmas season approaches let us hope that the peace and goodwill it represents extends to our beloved families and friends in that troubled land, as well as to each of you.

¡Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año!